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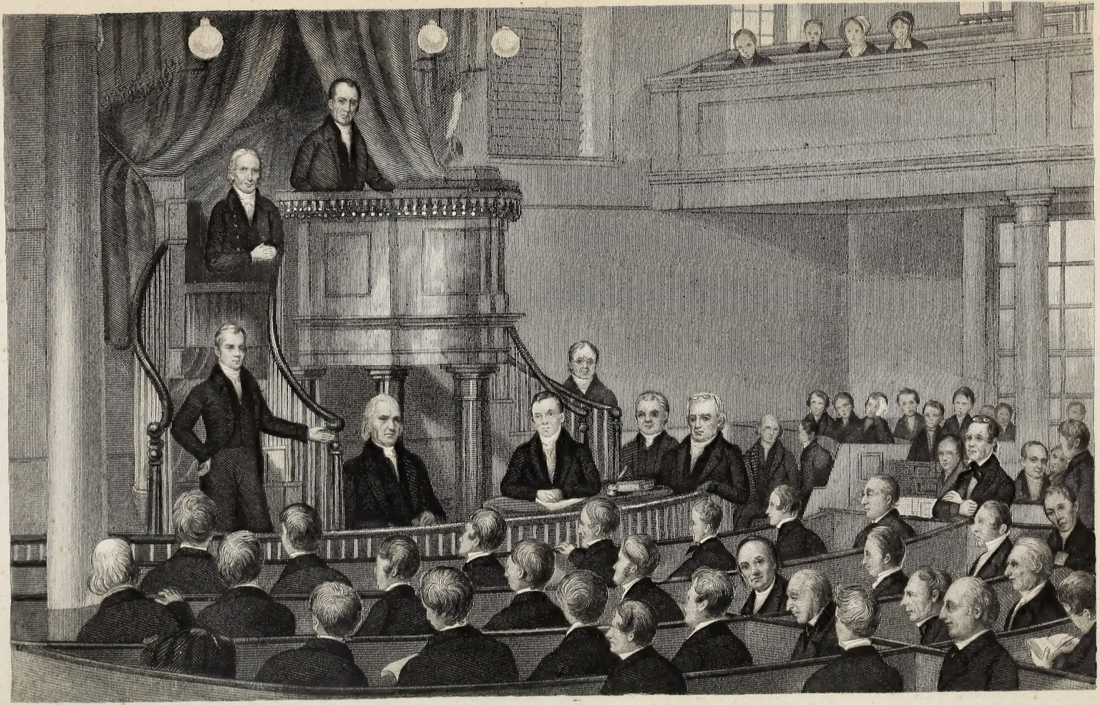

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# MEMORIALS

# OF

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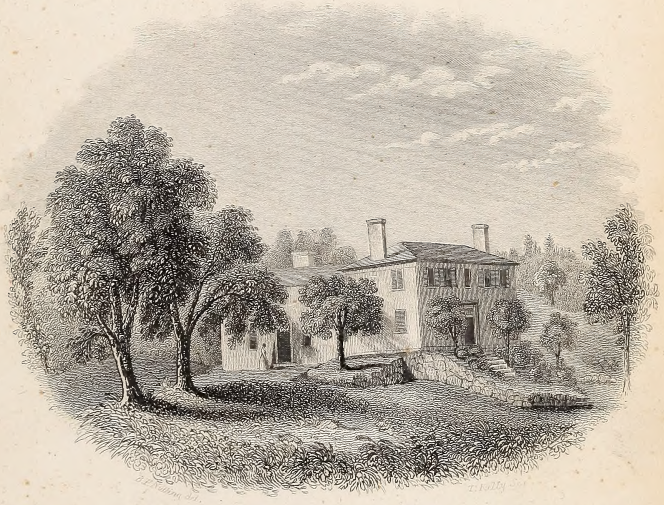

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BOSTON.

CHARLES H. PEIRCE.

# MEMORIALS

OF THE

# INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM

INTO THE

# EASTERN STATES:

COMPRISING BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF ITS EARLY PREACHERS,
SKETCHES OF ITS FIRST CHURCHES, AND REMINISCENCES
OF ITS EARLY STRUGGLES AND SUCCESSES.

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BY REV. A. STEVENS, A.M.

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# PREFACE.

THE present work will not, the author trusts, be subjected to the wonted rigor of criticism. Its pretensions are necessarily of the most unostentatious character. It claims not the dignity of History, nor even that of Annals, being not sufficiently consecutive and minute for the latter title, nor sufficiently general and elaborate for the former. It is simply what its title imports, "Memorials," not of the progress of Methodism in the eastern States, but of its *introduction* into them. Under this convenient title, the writer has attempted to give what biographical reminiscences are still extant respecting the early preachers of Methodism in those States, together with historical sketches of its earliest churches, accounts of its Conferences, Circuits, struggles and successes, the whole arranged, as far as practicable, in chronological order, and presenting the materials of its history in New England, down to the nineteenth century. The recorded data for such a work are very slight — and the author has had to depend largely on the correspondence of aged members and preachers of the denomination, a necessity which has involved exceeding labor and perplexity. He found, in many instances, that his inquiries were too late, the earliest records of important churches having, in numerous cases, been lost, and their first members gone to the grave. He has been conscious through the whole of his task, that it has been too long delayed. Anxious to save from utter loss, many evanescing reminiscences, he may have recorded some things which the reader will not deem worthy of the trouble. If so, several considerations must be borne in mind: First, that the volume is designed as a compilation of data, rather than a digested history conformed severely to the critical rules of historical composition; secondly, that many of these data are derived by correspondence from sources which will soon cease to exist, or from publications out of print, and therefore, if not now recorded, may soon be lost for ever; thirdly, that their insertion may lead to further researches and discoveries.

Some account is given of every Methodist preacher who was regularly appointed to New England during the first five years of our history. Several of these biographical notices are necessarily very slight; they are nevertheless inserted, that ampler information may be obtained, if possible. If some of them are deemed insignificant, it must be borne in mind that they occupy but a proportionately insignificant amount of room.

As many important facts in the work have been derived from original sources, and publications out of print, the author has chosen to let his authorities speak for themselves, to a considerable extent. And as he is the first who has written, largely, on the local history of Methodism in New England, he has given abundant marginal references, both to verify his statements and to aid further researches, should they hereafter be undertaken. In a subsequent volume, he hopes to continue the narrative through periods of more varied and more interesting events.

NOTE. — Several of the faces in the Frontispiece are real portraits; Timothy Merritt stands in the pulpit, George Pickering sits behind him, Dr. Fisk is addressing the Conference at the foot of the pulpit stairs; on his left sits Bishop Hedding, presiding, and Daniel Fillmore at the table, as Secretary; at the left of the latter are, first, John Brodhead; second, Enoch Mudge; and third, Asa Kent — all three within the altar. In about the centre of the pews Joseph A. Merrill will be recognized, with his face towards the spectator; on his left is Ebenezer F. Newell; behind the latter and in the adjacent right hand pew is Thomas C. Peirce; to the left of Mr. P., and slightly behind him, is Abraham D. Merrill, while at his right sits Epaphras Kibby and Isaac Bonney. Near the latter, Edward T. Taylor stands, with folded arms, in the aisle; behind Mr. T. sits David Kilburn, and before him, Phineas Crandall. The likenesses are as accurate as the scale of dimensions would admit.

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# CHAPTER I.

## JESSE LEE.

Lee on Boston Common — His early Life — Conversion and Sanctification — Commencement of his public labors — Is drafted into the Army — Scenes in the Camp — Enters the Itinerancy — Illustrations of his Ministry — Is appointed to New England.

In the centre of the Boston Common still stands a gigantic elm — the crowning ornament of its beautiful scenery. On a fine summer afternoon, in July, 1790, a man of middle age, of a serene but shrewd countenance, and dressed in a style of simplicity which might have been taken for the guise of a Quaker, took his stand upon a table beneath the branches of that venerable tree. Four persons approached, and gazed upon him with surprise, while he sang a hymn. It was sung by his solitary voice ; at its conclusion he knelt down upon the table, and stretching forth his hands, prayed with a fervor and unction so unwonted in the cool and minute petitions of the Puritan pulpits, that it attracted the groups of promenaders who had come to spend an evening hour in the shady walks, and by the time he rose from his knees they were streaming in processions, from the different points of the Common, towards him. While he opened his small Bible and preached to them without " notes," but with " the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," the multitude grew into a dense mass, three thousand strong, eagerly catching every utterance of the singular stranger, and some of them receiving his message into "honest and good hearts." One who heard him at or about this time, says: "When he stood up in the open air and began to sing, I knew not what it meant. I drew near, however, to listen, and thought the prayer was the best I had ever heard. He then read his text, and began, in a sententious manner, to address his remarks to the understanding and consciences of the people; and I thought all who were present must be constrained to say, 'It is good for us to be here.' All the while the people were gathering, he continued this mode of address, and presented us with such a variety of beautiful images, that I thought he must have been at infinite pains to crowd so many pretty things into his memory. But when he entered upon the subject matter of his text, it was with such an easy, natural flow of expression, and in such a tone of voice, that I could not refrain from weeping; and many others were affected in the same way. When he was done, and we had an opportunity of expressing our views to each other, it was agreed that such a man had not visited New England since the days of Whitefield. I heard him again, and thought I could follow him to the ends of the earth." *

That bold evangelist was Jesse Lee — the founder, under God, of Methodism in New England, and although the preceding year must be admitted as its true epoch, yet the year of his appearance in the eastern metropolis, 1790, may be considered the period in which it assumed a definite and secure position. He had arrived in Connecticut in June, 1789, and preached at Norwalk, New Haven, &c., and towards the termination of the year formed, as we shall hereafter see, a

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* Ware's Memoir, Chap. XIII.

class in Stratfield, a parish of Stratford, and another at Reading, but these were only preliminary movements. He was alone, surveying the ground. The classes in Stratford and Reading consisted, the first of but three, and the last of but two, members; the former was formed but about three months and the latter only about three days, prior to 1790. It was in the year we have designated, that a detachment of preachers, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith, arrived to prosecute the plans of Lee, and the labors of Methodism in New England were fairly begun. It was also in this year that the Annual Minutes report, for the first time, returns of members from New England towns.

Jesse Lee, then, appears in the history of New England Methodism as its primary and most prominent character—its founder. He was born in Prince George county, Virginia, in the year 1758. His parents were respectable members of the Protestant Episcopal Church. It was his good fortune early to receive, both at school and at home, a strictly Christian education. He mentions in his journal the salutary influence upon his childhood of the catechetical instruction of his teacher. "In a thousand instances," he says, "when I felt an inclination to act or speak amiss, I have been stopped by the recollection of my catechism, some parts of which I did not understand; yet it was good, upon the whole, that I learned it."*

This correct early training produced its usual consequences, conformably to the declaration of the wisest of men.† "I do not," says he, "recollect that I ever swore in my life, except one night, being in company with some wicked young people, I uttered some kind of oaths, for which I felt ashamed and sorry all the next day; and when alone, I felt that God was displeased with me for my bad conduct. I believe I never did any thing in my youth that the people called wicked. I used, however, to indulge bad tempers, and use some vain words."

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* Thrift's Life of Lee, Chapt. I. All future quotations from Mr. Lee it will be understood are from this Memoir Their places will be sufficiently indicated by their dates.

† Prov. 12: 6.

The convertion of both his parents, about his fourteenth year, led to a fuller consecration of their domestic circle. A pious conversation of his father with a friend, about this time, induced a train of reflections in his mind which resulted in profound religious convictions, and which he describes as follows:

"One of my mother's relations came to my father's and stayed all night; the topic of conversation was experimental religion. While engaged on this interesting subject, my father observed, 'that if a man's sins were forgiven, he would know it.' That sentence, 'if a man's sins were forgiven, he would know it,' took hold of my mind, and I pondered it in my heart. The next day, when alone in the field, it kept running across my mind, 'if a man's sins are forgiven, he will know it.' I thought it over and over again, and concluded it must be so, for my father said so, and I believed it. At length I began to reason with myself thus: are my sins forgiven? I hope so — but do I know it? No! I have no assurance of it; immediately it was impressed upon my mind with uncommon force, go and pray. The impression was repeated, and I went off into a large branch, which was surrounded with thick bushes; then I stopped and look to see if any person was near me, but could see no one; yet I thought some one might pass that way and see me, so I set off to another place where the bushes appeared to be yet thicker, but when I came there I was afraid of being seen; I then went to another place with the same reasoning, and the same fears, but at length I ventured to kneel down, and began to pray that the Lord would forgive my sins.

"My distress of soul at that time was very great, and never wore off till my sins were forgiven.

"I would frequently, after that time, get by myself, and with many tears, pray God to have mercy upon my poor soul, and forgive my sins. Sometimes, in the open fields, I have fallen on my knees, and prayed, and wept, till my heart was ready to break. At other times my heart was so hard, that I could not shed a tear. It would occur to my mind, 'your day of grace is past, and God will never forgive your sins.' It appeared to me, that of all sinners in the world I was the greatest.

"Thus I went on for about four weeks, in which time I never, for an hour, lost sight of my wretched condition. The cry of my soul was, 'how shall I escape the misery of hell?' I cared little about the sufferings of this life, if I could but escape eternal misery. I read, 'that some asked, and received not, because they asked amiss;' the remembrance of this, made me, for a season, afraid to use many words in prayer, for fear I should pray improperly, and, therefore, ask amiss.

"One morning, being in deep distress, fearing every moment I should drop into hell, and viewing myself as hanging over the pit, I was constrained to cry in earnest for mercy, and the Lord came to my relief, and delivered my soul from the burden and guilt of sin. My whole frame was in a tremor from head to foot, and my soul enjoyed sweet peace. The pleasure I then felt, was indescribable. This happiness lasted about three days, during which time I never spoke to any person about my feelings. I anxiously wished for some one to talk to me on the subject, but no one did. I then began to doubt my conversion and to fear that I was deceived

—I finally concluded that if I were not converted, I would never rest without the blessing, and began to pray to the Lord to show me my lost condition, and let me feel my danger, as I had previously done; but as I could not feel the burden of my sins, the enemy of my soul suggested to my mind that the Lord had forsaken me and that I had sinned away my convictions, and deceived my own soul. Thus I was a prey to those doubts and perplexities for about six months, before I could assuredly believe that I was in the favor of God. One evening, travelling in company with a religious neighbor, he asked me if I were ever converted? I told him I believed I had been. He asked me several questions relative to the circumstances of the change, which I endeavored to answer. He then said, 'you are surely converted.' I was much strengthened by that conversation, and so much encouraged as to tell other people, when they asked me, what the Lord had done for my soul."

Not long after, these misgivings (the usual trials of the recent convert) were completely removed by stronger manifestations of the divine favor. The Spirit itself bore witness with his spirit that he was the child of God, and enabled him to say, "I know in whom I have believed."

No Methodist preacher had yet visited the neighborhood, but these remarkable changes in himself and family, seem to have been brought about through the instrumentality of the Rev. Mr. Jarret, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and distinguished in the early history of Methodism for his cordial cooperation with its pioneers when they entered Virginia.

When, in 1774, a Methodist society was formed in the vicinity, young Lee, then but 16 years of age, together with both his parents, and an elder brother, immediately connected it. The doctrine and spirit of the new sect were accordant with their own experience. His father freely opened his house as a regular preaching place of the circuit, and for nearly half a century, it was the home of the laborious itinerant, whenever he passed through that section of his field. "Like the house of Obed-Edom," says the biographer of Lee, "the Lord blessed his, because the ark of the Lord rested there. This son often took sweet counsel with the preachers who visited his father's. They not only imparted instruction by the public ministration of the word, but in social conversation, they gave such advice as was suited to the particular case of each individual."

God had designed his young servant for signal services; it was not enough that he should be thus, almost from childhood, consecrated like Samuel, and trained under the personal example and conversation of those heroic men who composed our first ministry; he was to be led, while yet in the freshness of his youth, into the deep things of God, that he might be fully anointed with the unction of the Holy One, for the extraordinary labors of the future, and might be able to bear a testimony, which should be emphatic with the authority of his own experience, to the sufficiency of the blood of Christ to "cleanse from all unrighteousness." A remarkable revival of religion took place in his neighborhood, which, with its influence upon himself, he thus describes: — "We had the greatest revival of religion I had ever seen. I was at meetings where the whole congregation were bathed in tears; and sometimes their cries were so loud that the preacher's voice could not be heard. Some were seized with trembling, and in a few moments dropped on the floor as if they were dead, while others were embracing each other, with streaming eyes, and all were lost in wonder, love and praise. During that season, my soul was greatly blessed, and for the greater part of my time, I was 'strong in faith, giving glory to God.' I had such confidence in, and love to God and his service, that I was willing to be any thing, or nothing, so that God might be all in all."

But this happy frame of mind could not fully satisfy him; it led him to hunger and thirst still more after righteousness. The increased illumination he had received, enabled him to perceive more clearly the height of consecration and joy yet to be attained. He attended a Quarterly Meeting — one which seems to have been of the truly primitive style — a high, and holy festival — where scores were slain and made alive by the power of God. Several persons were sanctified wholly at this meeting. He caught the spirit of their example. "I went home," he says, "with a fixed determination to seek for a deeper work of grace, and to hope, and pray, and wait for that perfect love which casteth out all fear. I did firmly believe that the Lord was both able, and willing, to save to the utmost all that would come to him. I felt a *sweet distress* in my soul, for holiness of heart and life. I sensibly felt, while I was seeking for purity of heart, that I grew in grace, and in the knowledge of God. This concern of soul lasted for some time, till at length I could say, I have nothing but the love of Christ in my heart. I was assured that my soul was continually happy in God. The world, with all its charms, *is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world.*"

Thus abundantly endued with power from on high, while yet in his eighteenth year, he was maturing for the great work before him. Several occasions for the exercise of his gifts in public exhortation, presented themselves about this time, but his natural diffidence rendered the cross insupportable, and might have long interferred with his entrance into the ministry, had not domestic circumstances providentially led to his removal to North Carolina, where, away from the embarrassing associations of his native neighborhood, he felt more courage for such untried efforts. Here he was appointed a class leader, and soon began to exhort in public. He gives the following account of his first attempts as a public speaker:

"On the 8th of March I gave a public exhortation, which was my first attempt. I then lacked a few days of being twenty years old. The Saturday night following, I went to a watch night, at brother Lock's, where F. Garrettson led the meeting; he asked me to speak, and I exhorted; it was my second attempt. The next evening I attended a watch night, at C. Bustin's, where I exhorted again; but I felt truly sensible of my own weakness; and what made the cross heavier, was owing, probably, to the circumstance of having many of my old friends and acquaintances to hear me.

"From that time I frequently exhorted at prayer meetings and class meetings; and sometimes I appointed meetings in the neighborhood, or among the neighboring societies, with a view of speaking to the people, and of begging them to be reconciled to God.

"I have often admired the providence of God in opening the way for me to remove to North Carolina; for, had I continued among my relations in Virginia, I might not have begun my public labors so soon; for at that time of my life I was very timid. But when I removed among strangers, I lost, in some degree, my former fearfulness. I seldom gave an exhortation without weeping; for my heart yearned over the souls of poor sinners.

"At that time I could truly say, '*The zeal of thy house has eaten me up.*'

"During these exercises, I had very little thought of becoming a preacher; I only wished to exhort, and pray, and live to do good to the souls of the people. My soul was remarkably happy in general, both in private and in public. My chief wish and greatest concern was, to know the will of God, and to do it in all things, both great and small. At the close of the year, I went to visit my friends in Virginia, and was at meeting with them at different places, and exhorted them publicly, and with much earnestness, to flee the wrath to come, and prepare for a better world."

He returned to North Carolina, and was soon actively laboring as a local preacher.

Trials are necessary to the preparation of the successful ambassador of Christ. In 1780, Mr. Lee was subjected to a series of them, which, while they were peculiarly incongenial with his religious sentiments, nevertheless afforded him many lessons in the knowledge of human nature, that were of much subsequent advantage to him, and also tested, amidst the reckless vices of a camp, the firmness of his Christian character. The Revolutionary war was rife through the land. "Few," says his biographer, "who had arrived at the proper age, were exempt from taking an active part in the conflict. The militia were drafted, and it fell to Mr. Lee's lot to go. How illy it accorded with his religious views, may be seen in the following extracts:

"'I weighed the matter over and over again, but my mind was settled; as a Christian, and as a preacher of the gospel, I could not fight. I could not reconcile it to myself to bear arms, or to kill one of my fellow creatures. However, I determined to go, and to trust in the Lord, and accordingly prepared for my journey.

"'Monday, July 17, 1780, I left home, set out for the army, and travelled about twenty-five miles to Mr. Green Hill's, where I was kindly used. I tarried there all night.

"'Wednesday, 19th, I set off early in the morning, and travelled about sixteen miles, to Mr. Hines'. In the afternoon we had much conversation on spiritual matters, and in the evening I felt my heart more engaged with God in prayer than usual. I felt my dependence upon God, and though I believed that great difficulties lay before me, yet I resigned myself into the hands of God, and felt assured that he would protect and take care of me.

"'I did not join the army till the 29th. On the evening of that day I came in sight of the camp, was soon called on parade, and orders were given for all the soldiers to be furnished with guns. I then lifted up my heart to God, and besought him to take my cause into his hands, and support me in the hour of trial.

"'The sergeant soon came round with the guns, and offered one to me, but I would not take it. Then the lieutenant brought me one, but I refused to take it. He said I should go under guard. He then went to the colonel, and coming back, brought a gun and set it down against me. I told him he had as well take it away, or it would fall. He then took me with him, and delivered me to the guard.

"'After a while the colonel came and taking me out a little way from the guard, began to converse with me, and to assign many reasons why I should bear arms; but his reasons were not sufficiently cogent to make any alteration in my mind. He then told the guard to take care of me, and so left me."'

Befitting firmness for a soldier of the cross! But he not only refused to violate his conscience by bearing arms — he remembered that he was panoplied for a higher warfare, and immediately set himself about it. "After dark," he says, "I told the guard we must pray before we slept, and having a Baptist under guard, I asked him to pray, which he did. I then told the people, if they would come out early in the morning, I would pray with them. I felt remarkably happy in God under all my trouble, and did not doubt but that I should be delivered in due time. Some of the soldiers brought me straw to lay upon, and offered me their blankets and great coats for covering. I slept pretty well that night, which was the first and the last night I was ever under guard.

"Sunday, 30th. — As soon as it was light, I was up, and began to sing, some hundreds of people soon assembled and joined with me, and we made the plantation ring with the songs of Zion. We then knelt down and prayed; while I was praying, my soul was happy in God; I wept much and prayed loud, and many of the poor soldiers also wept. I do not think that I ever felt more willing to suffer for the sake of religion, than I did at that time."

He went further. A neighboring inn-keeper, while yet in bed, heard his early prayer, was affected to tears, and came entreating him to preach. In a short time the man of God was standing on a bench near the tent of his commanding officer, proclaiming as his text, "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" Such was Jesse Lee. "I was enabled," says he, "to speak plainly, and without fear; and I wept while endeavoring to declare my message. Many of the people, officers as well as men, were bathed in tears before I was done. That meeting afforded me an ample reward for all my trouble. At the close of the meeting, some of the gentlemen went about with their hats, to make a collection of money for me, at which I was very uneasy, and ran in among the people, and begged them to desist."

Fidelity to duty is the best means of securing alike the esteem of men and the protection of God. When his colonel heard of his preaching, "It affected him very much," says Lee, "so he came and took me out to talk with me on the subject of bearing arms. I told him I could not kill a man, with a good conscience, but I was a friend to my country, and was willing to do any thing I could, while I continued in the army, except that of fighting. He then asked me if I would be willing to drive their baggage wagon. I told him I would, though I had never drove a wagon before. He said their main cook was a Methodist, and could drive the wagon when we were on a march, and I might lodge and eat with him, to which I agreed. He then released me from guard."

For nearly four months was he detained in the army, suffering the severest privations and trials, — fatiguing marches, want of food, the clamorous profanity of the camp, and sickness, that, in one instance, endangered his life, but during which he was "comforted to find that he had no doubt of his salvation," "for," he adds, "I believed that should the Lord see fit to remove me from this world, I should be called to join the armies of heaven."

During these sufferings, he continued to preach, whenever circumstances admitted, and not without effect on his hardy hearers. "Many of them," he says, on one occasion, "were very solemn, and some of them wept freely under the preaching of the Word. I was happy in God, and thankful to him for the privilege of warning the wicked once more. It was a great cross for me to go forward in matters of so much importance, where there were few to encourage, and many to oppose; but I knew that I had to give an account to God for my conduct in the world — I felt the responsibility laid upon me, and was resolved to open my mouth for God. I often thought I had more cause to praise and adore him for his goodness than any other person. For some weeks I hardly ever prayed in public, or preached, or reproved a sinner, without seeing some good effects produced by my labors."

For more than a year after his discharge from the army, he was zealously occupied in preaching, about his native neighborhood. He was, meanwhile, frequently impressed with the conviction that it was his duty to enter the travelling ministry, but hesitated, under a consciousness of the responsibility of the sacred office. In this state of suspense, he attended the session of an annual Conference, held at Ellis' Chapel, in Sussex Co., Virginia, April, 1782. Thirty preachers were present — an heroic band of itinerant evangelists. The spectacle of these devoted and self-sacrificing men, their ardent zeal for God, their sympathy and forbearance for each other, touched his heart, as the like spectacle often has the hearts of thousands of others. He thus speaks of this affecting scene: — "The union and brotherly love which I saw among the preachers, exceeded every thing I had ever seen before, and caused me to wish that I was worthy to have a place among them. When they took leave of each other, I observed that they embraced each other in their arms, and wept as though they never expected to meet again. Had heathens been there, they might have well said, 'See how these Christians love one another!' By reason of what I saw and heard, during the four days that the Conference sat, I found my heart truly humbled in the dust, and my desires greatly increased to love and serve God more perfectly than I had ever done before. At the close of the Conference, Mr. Asbury came to me, and asked me if I was willing to take a circuit. I told him that I could not well do it, but signified I was at a loss to know what was best for me to do. I was afraid of hurting the cause which I wished to promote; for I was very sensible of my own weakness. At last he called to some of the preachers standing in the yard, a little way off, and said, 'I am going to enlist brother Lee.' One of them replied, 'What bounty do you give?' He answered, 'Grace here, and glory hereafter, will be given, if he is faithful.' Some of the preachers then talked to me, and persuaded me to go, but I trembled at the thought, and shuddered at the cross, and did not at that time consent."

But though thus hesitating, he went home and prepared his temporal affairs, that he might be able to obey the divine call, and enter more fully upon what he now felt was the destiny of his life. Before the end of the year, he was on his way, with a colleague, to North Carolina, to form a new and extensive circuit. The next year, he was appointed to labor regularly in that State, and being now fully in the sphere of his duty, he was largely blessed with the comforts of the divine favor, and went through the extensive rounds of his circuit "like a flame of fire." His word was accompanied with the authority and power of the Holy Ghost. Stout-hearted men were smitten down under it, large congregations were often melted into tears by irrepressible emotions, and his eloquent voice was not unfrequently lost amidst the sobs and ejaculations of his audience. Often, his own deep sympathies, while in the pulpit, could find relief only in tears. A better illustration of his character, as a preacher, cannot, perhaps, be cited, than the profound and thrilling effect of his preaching, on both himself and his hearers. He records numerous instances:

"Sunday, 20th of July, I preached at Whittaker's, Roan Oak Circuit, and the congregation wept under the Word. When we met the class, the power and presence of the Lord was among us, and many cried aloud. I was so deeply affected that I could not speak, till I had stopped and wept for some time. I preached again at night, and the people wept greatly."

"Saturday, 31st, I preached at Mr. Spain's, with great liberty, to a good congregation; the Spirit of the Lord came upon us, and we were bathed in tears. I wept, and so loud were the people's cries, that I could scarcely be heard, though

I spoke very loud. I met the class; most of the members expressed a great desire for holiness of heart and life, and said they were determined to seek for perfect love."

"I preached at Howel's Chapel, where the Lord was pleased once more to visit my soul. I spoke with many tears, and was very happy. The hearers wept greatly. It was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. When I met the class, the people could hardly speak for weeping. It was a precious day to my soul. When I arose in the morning, I spent some time in walking about, meditating, and in earnest prayer. After a while I went into the woods and sat down, and began to reflect on what the Lord had done for my soul; and then began to think what he was still willing to do for me, till I wept before him. My cry was, 'Glory to God for ever;' he is the joy of my heart all the day long."

"Saturday, 20th, I preached at Howel's Chapel, from Ezek. 33:11: 'Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord,' &c. It was to me a time of uncommon comfort. When I came to the last part of the text, and to show what Christ had done for the people, that they might not die, many of the hearers wept, and some of them cried aloud. I saw so clearly that the Lord was willing to bless the people, even while I was speaking, that I began to feel distressed for them, at last I burst into tears, and could not speak for some moments. After stopping and weeping for some time, I began again, but had spoken but a little while before the cries of the people overcame me, and I wept with them, so that I could not speak. I found that love had tears, as well as grief. My full heart was constrained to cry,

'No pain, no suffering I decline,
Only let all my heart be thine.'"

Such a spirit as this cannot fail to captivate the multitude unto Christ. The man who thus preaches will and must have large congregations, and his ministry will and must prove a savor of life unto life to them, and at the same time a joy and profit to himself. Is it matter of surprise, that in preaching his last sermon on a circuit, the people wept so much that he could not proceed? "I sat down," he says, "and wept several minutes. I then left the house, but before I could get far, they came around me, weeping. I began to bid them farewell, and to speak a few words to them; but my grief was so great that I was soon forced to stop."

During the next year, 1784, he labored on Salisbury circuit, North Carolina, and here the same traits characterized, and the same results followed, his ardent ministry. In four days after his arrival on the circuit, we find him writing in the following strain:

"Sunday, 13th, I preached at Hern's, to a large company of solemn hearers. While I was speaking of the love of God, I felt so much of that love in my own soul, that I burst into a flood of tears, and could speak no more for some time, but stood and wept. I then began again, but was so much overcome that I had to stop and weep several times before I finished my subject. There were very few dry eyes in the house. O, my God! what am I, that thou art mindful of me? It was a cross to me to come to this circuit, but now I feel assured that the Lord will be with and support me. The next day, I preached at brother Carter's, where I spoke, with many tears, to a weeping congregation."

While on this circuit his labors were indefatigable, his journeys incessant, his health at times prostrated, his life endangered by exposure to the weather and the fording of rivers. Still we hear but one strain, expressive of unabated fervor, triumphant faith, and yearning, weeping sympathy for souls.

Specimens might be cited in abundance. We give but one more from his journal the present year: "I preached," he says, "at Tillman's, and felt an ardent desire to be of some service to the souls of the people. There was a gracious move among the hearers, and before I got through my discourse, I wept over my audience for some time. None but God knows what I felt at that time. My heart was ready to break with grief on the account of poor sinners, who were perishing in their sins. In many cases, it appeared as if I could preach till I dropped dead in the pulpit, if it would be the means of bringing souls to the knowledge of God. My heart cried out, 'O, Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the year.'"

His next appointment was on Carolina circuit, N. C., and in the year following he travelled Kent circuit, Md. The latter included four large counties. His labors were Herculean. He observes that in four weeks he had to preach thirty-one sermons, and lead fifty-two classes. Three hundred were added to the church during his ministry on this circuit, and such scenes as have already been described were of frequent occurrence. He records seasons "when weeping was heard in every part of the house," when his "own heart seemed ready to break" with sympathy for his hearers, and his tears suppressed, for a time, his utterance.

His appointment in 1787, was to Baltimore city circuit. His large spirit could not brook the restrictions imposed by the usual plans of even circuit labor. He went forth from the chapels of the city, and took his stand on the Common, and here, as usual, his popular address and fervent eloquence won the interest and touched the sympathies of the multitude.

He preached in the market on Howard's Hill, also in that on the Point, and thus brought the sound of the divine word within the hearing of multitudes of sailors, and the neglected poor, who otherwise might have never heard it. He had his usual success in Baltimore. "Many souls," he writes, "have been awakened and converted in the circuit, this year. I suppose there has not been so great a work among the people for eight or ten years, as there has been this year. And in many places the work is still progressing. There have been much pain and sorrow, and many tears shed, at our parting."

We find him next on Flanders circuit, the first Methodist preacher who visited that part of New Jersey. The spirit and power of his ministry continues as before. We give, as a specimen, his description of a Watch-night service:

"I preached on 1. Cor., 16 : 13 :—'*Watch ye.*' I found great liberty in speaking from these words, and was blessed in my own soul. I spoke very long and loud, the power of God came down among the people, and many of them wept greatly; many groaned and wept aloud. O, my soul, praise the Lord, and let the remembrance of this meeting make me ever thankful. I spoke with tears in my eyes, and comfort in my soul. If I may judge from my own feelings, or the looks of the people, I should conclude that a revival of religion is about to take place in the neighborhood. I have not seen so melting a time among them before. I knew not how to give over speaking, and continued for an hour and three quarters."

Such, again we say, was Jesse Lee. God had evidently raised him up and thrust him forth for great deeds. The time to attempt them was now at hand. On leaving the Flanders circuit, he attended a Conference in New York city, in 1789, and thence set his face towards New England.

We have thus briefly traced his personal career, down to the period in which it becomes identified with New England

Methodism. His character is the chief portrait in our early history; — the preceding illustrations are its best exponents, and, therefore, not irrelevant to the scope of the present work. His course, thus far, was but preliminary to the greater labors which awaited him. The brief glances we have taken of it show us that he entered New England with the traits of an apostle, and we are prepared, from this review, to follow him in his untried field, with unfaltering anticipations of success. These glowing traits and successful achievements had, indeed, their occasional contrasts, and it might be profitable, had we room, to exhibit them. They would, however, but serve to confirm and enlarge the estimate we have already formed of his rare character, by proving that he could surmount obstacles and endure discouragements, as well as triumph in the day of success — that he could storm batteries and pull down strong-holds, as well as conquer in the open field.

# CHAPTER II.

## INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO NEW ENGLAND.

Lee's Appointment — Previous progress of Methodism — State of Religion in New England — Points of contrast between the Theology of Methodism and the Theology of New England — Arminianism — Reaction of Calvinism — Effects of Methodism.

As early as 1775, while achieving in the South the successes we have described, Mr. Lee had turned his eye towards New England. While accompanying Bishop Asbury to Charleston, S. C., they were hospitably entertained at a place called Charaws, by a merchant, whose clerk was a native of Massachusetts. Mr. Lee learned much from this young gentleman respecting the religious condition of New England. His reflections at the time led to a deep impression that it was his duty to extend the energetic labors of Methodism into that section of the country. His biographer assures us that " this impression was not a bare impulse of the moment, but continued from that time until he was enabled to realize his wishes. He frequently conversed with Mr. Asbury on the subject, and expressed his ardent wish to be permitted to go upon a mission to the people of the New England States. But Mr. Asbury, at that time, thought it best to advance gradually, and go where they were invited; calculating, probably, that it was best to acquire a greater number of preachers, before they extended their labors so far; and that it would require the exertions of more than one to get a permanent footing in those territories. Mr. Lee, after this, made very zealous exertions in order to enlist preachers to go with him on this missionary expedition; but was very unsuccessful, for several years, in gaining recuits, and it was not until five years had elapsed from the time he first felt an impression on this subject, that his wishes were realized."*

The purpose thus formed in the distant South, and contemplating a task which involved, at that time, most formidable obstacles, was characteristic of the man, and was pursued with characteristic zeal and steadiness. During several years he had been gradually advancing, in his annual appointments, towards the North, his eye fixed unwaveringly on New England. At last, in May, 1789, we find him attending the Conference in New York, and receiving an appointment to what appears for the first time in the Minutes, as Stamford circuit.† "In the name of God he set forward," says his biographer, "and on the 11th of June arrived in the State of Connecticut."

Let us drop briefly the thread of our narrative, to glance over the new moral field, while he journeys towards it.

Methodism had been spreading with remarkable progress through the middle and Southern States, for nearly a quarter of a century, before the visit of Lee to New England. It was introduced into New York city in 1766, by a company of Wesleyans from Ireland, among whom was Philip Embury, a local preacher, who administered to them the word of life, assisted by Capt. Webb, a devout officer of the British army.

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* Thrift's Memoir, Chap. V.

† Minutes, 1789.

They consecrated, in 1768, the first Methodist chapel erected in the new world. Meanwhile, not less than one hundred members had been formed into a society in Philadelphia, through the labors of Capt. Webb. The next year, Mr. Wesley despatched to their assistance two of his preachers, Messrs. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor. In two years more (1771) the laborious Asbury arrived, accompanied by Richard Wright. Asbury was providentially designated as the leader of American Methodism. His vigorous and energetic mind gave it system and impulse every where. At his arrival, the aggregate membership could scarcely have exceeded 600, but in less than two years after, 1160 members were reported to the *first Conference* (July 4, 1773.) Methodism had scattered its germs in five States. At the next Conference, this number had nearly doubled, and a band of 17 laborers were in the field. In 1784, the church was formally organized, under the direction of Mr. Wesley, with an Episcopal polity, a system of moral discipline and articles of faith prepared by Wesley himself. It had increased, at this period, notwithstanding the drawback of the Revolutionary War, to nearly 15,000 members, and 83 preachers; and by the time of Lee's mission to New England, five years subsequent, the spiritual host was more than 43,000 strong, led on by nearly 200 devoted Itinerant evangelists. Eleven Conferences were held that year, in almost as many States. Methodism had spread into all the Atlantic States out of New England; it had penetrated into the primal wildernesses of the West, and its Itinerant heralds were marching with the banner of the cross in the van of that vast emigration which had then commenced, and has since covered the immense regions of the Ohio and Mississippi.

Why had it not entered New England earlier? And what special reasons justified its introduction there now?

Doubtless the greater moral wants of the rest of the country had hitherto diverted its attention from the older and less necessitous communities of the North-eastern States; but now that it had attained the vigor of a numerous and organized body, and had projected its comprehensive plans over all the rest of the land, it was deemed befitting that its quickening message should be heard among the venerable but languishing churches of the Puritans.

Its movement in this new direction was rendered expedient by the undeniable condition of the New England churches.

The civil relations of the church in New England had created other than spiritual motives for the profession of religion. None could hold office or vote, in her early days, unless a member of the church. It would be superfluous to comment upon the inevitable influence of such a fact; religion becomes more a matter of form than of principle — a qualification for the State, for society, or for patronage in business, rather than a preparation for heaven — and pharisaism and hypocrisy are more likely to prevail than a sincere personal faith. One of the highest authorities of the New England church — the "venerable Stoddard" — published in a sermon, "That sanctification [holiness] is not a necessary qualification for partaking of the Lord's Supper," and subsequently he wrote an "Appeal to the Learned, being a vindication of the right of visible saints to the Lord's Supper, though they be destitute of a saving work of God's Spirit in their hearts." Though vigorously opposed, his views were adopted by his own church at Northampton, and prevailed extensively in New England. In the last mentioned work, he defends the ministry of unconverted men, contending that they have official functions which they may rightfully execute. It is well known that similar views existed throughout the Calvinistic churches of the whole land. In the Presbyterian church of the Middle States, a majority of the synod contended that all persons baptized, and not heretical or scandalous, should be allowed the Lord's supper; and that such persons, if educated for the purpose, should be admitted to the ministry. Regeneration they considered not ascertainable " by investigation, and not necessary to church membership or the ministerial office." The Tennents and their coadjutors labored strenuously to reform these crude sentiments, but against an opposition that distracted and rent the church for years. Gilbert Tennent's " Nottingham Sermon," on " the dangers of an unconverted ministry " — a terribly scathing discourse — was occasioned by this opposition. He declares in it that " The body of the clergy are as great strangers to the feeling experience of the new birth as was Nicodemus." He and his associates were excluded from the synod the next year — the prime cause of what is called, in the history of the Presbyterian church, " The great Schism." The Methodist Ministry had to combat these defective and dangerous views through the length and breadth of the land.

They were not uncommon in New England. Dr. Chauncy, a prominent character among the Boston clergy, in writing against Whitefield's opposition to an unconverted ministry, declared that " Conversion does not appear to be alike necessary for ministers in their public capacity as officers of the church, as in their private capacity," and not a few clergymen and theological students acknowledged Whitefield as the instrument of their conversion. Whitefield said, " many, perhaps most, that preach I fear do not experimentally know Christ." * At the time of his third visit there were not less than twenty ministers in the vicinity of Boston who had been

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* Great Awakening, page 104.

converted through his instrumentality after entering upon the sacred office or their studies preparatory for it.* The author of "The Great Awakening" asserts this deplorable state of the New England church. He says, "There were many in the churches, and some even in the ministry, who were yet lingering among the supposed preliminaries of conversion. The difference between the world and the church was vanishing away, church discipline was neglected, and the growing laxness of morals was invading the churches. And yet, never, perhaps, had the expectation of reaching heaven at last been more general and more confident."†

The devout-minded Edwards lifted up a standard for the remnants of the faithful. The providence of God directed the course of Whitefield through the decaying vineyard, and Gilbert Tennent followed in his track. A wide-spread impression was produced. Revivals occurred, attended with all those remarkable phenomena which, in later years, have been referred to by our Orthodox brethren as proofs of the fanaticism of Methodism.

That the religious sensation of 1740 produced a permanent impression on the Calvinistic churches of New England, cannot be questioned; yet we believe they owe their later prosperity chiefly to later influences, and not a little to that general spirit of revival, that philanthropic activity and spiritual emulation, which all must acknowledge to have been co-existent with, and we believe to have been consequent upon, the extraordinary out-spread of Methodism through the country. The great revival of 1740 subsided. Owing to the fanaticism of Davenport and others, it was turned into reproach. The civil courts interfered unfavorably. A host of clergymen, with Chauncy at their head, arrayed themselves against it, opposing it through both the press and the pulpit. In 1743, the annual Convention of pastors in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, issued their protest, ostensibly against its "errors," but actually against the revival; and, though opposed by a counter protest, their attack had an effectual influence on its subsequent history. Bitter controversies were rife; and when Whitefield arrived on his second visit, sick and prostrated by the voyage, he found the whole community in agitation. The contrast between this and his former visits is painfully affecting. The propriety of inviting him to the pulpits was discussed in the newspapers. A number of "Associations" published "Testimonies" against him. Some who had been among his cordial friends at former visits, were now among his opponents. The faculties of both Yale and Harvard, where he had been received before with affectionate warmth, published "Declarations" against him, and it was obvious that a wide-spread revulsion had taken place. The change proceeded still further, until we find at last Edwards, the luminary of the times, dismissed from his charge, the first scene of the revival, and the spiritual prospects of the New England church beclouded by a general declension and settled gloom. In Boston itself, the number of parishes in 1785, five years before Lee's arrival, was actually less than a half a century before.[*] Methodism — a revival church in its spirit, a missionary church in its economy — felt that it had a work to do, under such circumstances.

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* Great Awakening, Chapter II., p. 393.

† Ibid.

But further: Even in the best days of the Puritan church it had failed to exalt the standard of Christian experience to what Methodists deemed its Scriptural altitude. Though we meet in the New England theology with the phrase "As-

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[†] Epis. Obs. 1846.

surance of faith," yet that experience was supposed to be limited to a few anomalous cases, and, as a necessary sequence of the doctrine of election, was applied to the eternal as well as the present condition of the favored saint. The personal "knowledge of sins forgiven," as the common privilege of all true believers, was denounced as presumption and heresy. Even the devout Edwards, in vindicating himself against his opponents, repelled the charge of teaching it. Methodism, with St. Paul, held this heresy as a most wholesome truth, and very full of comfort. Its people were taught never to rest satisfied with their spiritual experience till the spirit itself should bear witness with their spirits that they were the children of God.

It felt itself called upon to attempt to rectify the vagueness and superficiality of Christian experience in New England, by supplying this deficiency in its theology.

Not only in regard to the *evidence* of personal religion, but more especially in regard to its *extent*, did it deem the New England theology deficient. That theology taught the necessary continuance of sin in believers through life. It interpreted St. Paul's personation of the awakened sinner under the law, (Rom. 7: 7–25,) as the necessary experience of saints under the evangelical covenant. This was, in the judgment of Methodism, a deplorable error, depreciative alike of the efficacy of the grace of God and the practical standard of the Christian life, and liable to perilous applications. Methodism, on the contrary, taught that men should "go on to perfection," not as a mere aspiration to an ideal perfection, — the pursuit of what can never be attained — but as a legitimate and practical object of Christian faith. While it denied the possibility, in this life, of absolute, angelic or Adamic perfection, or a perfection that admitted not of continued additions of grace,— while it taught the necessary continuance of human infirmity and temptation to the end of the Christian pilgrimage, it nevertheless proclaimed it the privilege of all saints to be delivered from all voluntary depravity. This high experience it considered to be what the New Testament Scriptures designate and enjoin as "Perfection" — (Matt. 5: 48; 2 Cor., 13: 2;) meaning thereby more a negative than a positive perfection — a perfection not according to the law, but according to the modified relation which believers sustain to the law under the evangelical covenant.

Methodism deemed, then, that it had a momentous message for New England, in this respect.

It came also with the voice of remonstrance against some of the principal doctrines of the Puritan church, which it deemed derogatory to the gospel, and of dangerous practical consequence. Such were the tenets of Pre-election, Pre-reprobation, Final Perseverance, Infant Damnation, &c. We shall see hereafter that these were considered fundamental truths at the time of Lee's visit to New England, and that some of his most serious, as well as his most ludicrous rencontres, arose from them.

Few forms of religious belief were more repulsive to the people of New England, at the time of our introduction among them, than what is called Arminianism. It is curious to observe what distorted ideas of its doctrines were then current. The author of the "Great Awakening" says: "There was then a horror of Arminianism, such as is difficult now to understand. Men had not then forgotten the tremendous evils which had grown out of the doctrine of salvation by works. * * * The argument most constantly used against Arminianism, in those days, was its tendency to prepare the way for Popery. * * * There had been a gradual and silent increase of Arminianism. Scarce any would acknowledge themselves Arminians; but, in many places, the preaching more and more favored the belief that the unconverted might, without supernatural aid, commence and carry on a series of works preparatory to conversion; and that those who could do it were doing very well, and were in little danger."

It is evident that the author of the work from which we quote is not himself exempt from similar objections to Arminianism. And yet no system of religious opinions can be more hostile than this to the very evils ascribed to it. From no passage in the works of Arminius can the "doctrine of salvation by works" be fairly deduced. It was a leading proposition of his system, that salvation is by faith; and that "true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free will," but from the energy of the Holy Ghost.* The followers of Wesley teach the same. No modern Christians have proclaimed more emphatically the doctrines of original sin, the exclusive merit of the atonement, justification by faith alone, and kindred tenets. They are reiterated every Sabbath in all our pulpits. The alleged errors are not Arminian; they are Pelagian. Arminians have become Pelagians, but not from the legitimate tendency of Arminianism. Calvinists have often become Antinomians; but will the followers of Calvin hold themselves responsible for such a result? Yet it is believed by many to be the logical issue of their system; while no such relation can be asserted between Arminianism and Pelagianism. The capital difference between Calvinists and ourselves relates to the subject of unconditional election, and its necessary consequences, — the final perseverance of the elect, and the reprobation of the non-elect. The only ground that Calvinists have for alleging that we teach "salvation by works" is the fact that we deny this tenet. But how does this denial logically involve the rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith, &c., so pertinaciously attributed to Arminianism?

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* See Buck's Theological Dictionary; Watson's do.; Bangs' Life of Arminius.

Methodism attempted the correction of these misapprehensions, and the attempt has not been unsuccessful. Prejudice has yileded to better information. The Calvinists of New England have seen that men can believe themselves sinners, and acknowledge the full merit of the atonement, without receiving the "horrible decretum," as it was properly named by Calvin himself. It is a fact which cannot be denied, that the Genevan theology is, to say the least, latent in New England. Some still avow its doctrines, but they seldom receive a distinct enunciation in the public assembly. There is a universal conviction that the popular mind will not tolerate them; and this, too, be it remarked, not at a time of spiritual declension, but of advanced religious interest. Methodism has had an agency in this change without doubt. She has scattered through New England thousands of laymen, and hundreds of preachers, who glory in the doctrine of universal redemption. Their numbers and unrivalled activity have had effect. Thousands and tens of thousands have received, with gladness and praise, their enlarged views of the divine compassion of the Father, and the atoning merit of the Son; and these views begin to find utterance in all the pulpits of the land.

Further: the entrance of Methodism into New England was eminently providential, in another regard. The rigid theology of her old churches was rapidly producing that disastrous reaction which has attended it in every other land. Universalism, Unitarianism, and semi-infidelity, had been germinating under its shade. They have grown and borne fruit since, but not to the extent they would, had not a more benign creed been presented to the community. One of the most rigid organs of Puritanism admits that, "The Unitarian apostacy has involved a large proportion of the churches which were first organized by the first settlers of New England. In the Plymouth colony, the original churches were first in the apostacy; and the church in South Marshfield is now the oldest Orthodox church in that colony. And, in the Massachusetts colony, the six first in order, of the time of organization, have gone; and the church in Lynn is now the oldest Orthodox church of the Massachusetts colony. All that were established before it have despised their birthright, and are in hostility to the doctrines and religion of the Puritans, and of the Reformation." *

It is well known that all the Puritan churches of Boston became infected with Socinianism, until only one (the old South) still maintained a dubious acknowledgment of the Genevan faith.

It was the horror which the despondent doctrines of Calvin inspired, that led to these remarkable changes; and we have reason to believe that Methodism has afforded an intermediate and safe ground for thousands who, in their revolt from Calvinism, would otherwise have passed over to the other and more fatal extreme.

Such were the circumstances which justified and demanded the introduction of Methodism into New England. That it did not mistake its mission, has been demonstrated by the result. Besides its own prosperous growth, the churches of New England are again alive, and their moral energies active for the salvation of the world. What agency has effected the change, under the divine Spirit? Has the existence of some

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* New England Puritan, Sept., 1842.

seven hundred preachers, traversing the land and ceaselessly laboring, and some seventy thousand laymen, proverbial for energy and zeal, been without effect on the public mind? Has it had no part — no highly important part — in the resuscitation of religion? Could such an agency operate any where, even in a heathen community, without important effect? What other special agency has operated meanwhile? We wish not presumptuously to exalt Methodism. We wish only its actual influence, its historical position among the churches, acknowledged. Were there a more candid disposition to acknowledge it, we should be saved the invidious task of asserting it. The fact is unquestionable, that Methodism, with its circuits and districts intersecting the whole land, its numerous annual camp-meetings, its perpetual revivals, its innumerable class-meetings, prayer-meetings, four-days-meetings, its emphatic mode of preaching, and its assiduous pastoral labors, has aroused New England, infecting or provoking its churches by its example. The assumption cannot be gainsayed. Not only is it matter of history, but of sober and irresistible inference, that such universal and powerful agencies have had effect, extraordinary effect. Within view of almost every Congregational church in New England, the successors of Lee have erected a tabernacle whose altar has been habitually bedewed with the tears of the penitent and the renewed. While we have thus set an example to our predecessors, and provoked their zeal, it is a well known fact that a large proportion of our converts have been gathered into their churches, carrying with them, we trust, some of the spirit of our cause.

But though thus justified by both the reasons and the results of its introduction into New England, the progress of Methodism has, from the beginning, cost untold exertions on the part of its ministry and people. We shall now proceed to trace more directly these exertions.

# CHAPTER III.

## LEE IN NEW ENGLAND.

Lee enters New England — Preaches on the highway at Norwalk — Rev. Cornelius Cook — Scenes at Fairfield — New Haven — Reading — Stratfield — Stratford — Vexatious Trials — Visit to Rhode Island — Cheering Reception — Preaches in the Court House at New London — Returns to his Connecticut Circuit — Formation of the First Class in New England — Singular Treatment — Second Society formed — Reflections — Third Class — New Heralds enter the Field.

The history of Methodism in New England, for the first two or three years, is but the personal biography of its remarkable founder. During the first year, he was alone in the new field, and when others came to his help, he left them to occupy the posts he had already established, while he himself went to and fro in all directions, penetrating to the remotest north-eastern frontier, preaching in private houses, in barns, on the highways, forming new circuits and identifying himself with every advancement of the church.

We have seen him depart from the Conference at New York, for Connecticut. He arrived the 11th of June, 1789, and preached his first sermon in New England at Norwalk, the 17th of that month. The difficulties he encountered in the outset were characteristic of the community, and were met with his characteristic persistence.

"Wednesday, June 17, I set off," he says, "to take a tour further in Connecticut than ever any of our preachers have been. I am the first that has been appointed to this State, by the Conference. I set off with prayer to God for a blessing on my endeavors, and with an expectation of many oppositions. At 4 o'clock I arrived in Norwalk, and went to a Mr. Rogers', where one of our friends had asked liberty for me to preach. When I came, Mrs. R. told me her husband was from home, and was not willing for me to preach in his house. I told her we would hold meetings in the road, rather than give any uneasiness. We proposed speaking in an old house, which stood just by, but she was not willing. I then spoke to an old lady about preaching in her orchard, but she would not consent, and said we would tread the grass down. The other friend gave notice to some of the people. They soon began to collect, and we went to the road, where we had an apple tree to shade us. When the woman saw that I was determined to preach, she said I might preach in the old house; but I told her I thought it would be better to remain where we were. So I began on the side of the road, with about twenty hearers. After singing and praying, I preached on John 3 : 7 : 'Ye must be born again.' *I felt happy that we were favored with so comfortable a place.* After preaching, I told the people that I intended to be with them again in two weeks, and if any of them would open their houses to receive me, I should be glad; but if they were not willing, we would meet at the same place. Some of them came, and desired that I should meet at the town-house, the next time; so I gave consent. Who knows but I shall yet have a place in this town where I may lay my head?

It has generally been supposed that this was the first Methodist sermon preached in the town of Norwalk, or even the State of Connecticut, but Lee himself mentions the prior labors of Mr. Black; and Rev. Cornelius Cook had preached in Norwalk about two years before Lee's arrival. Mr. Cook entered the itinerant ministry in 1787, and died of the yellow fever in New York in 1789. His career was brief, but useful. His death was sudden; he was buried with all his clothes on and his money and watch in his pockets. He was not forgotten, however; his remains were disinterred, and one of his fellow laborers, who still lives a hoary-headed veteran of our ministry,* took his watch and has carried it since, as a memorial of his faithful friend.†

"Thursday, 18th," continues Lee, "I rode about sixteen miles, to Fairfield, and put up at Mr. Penfield's tavern, near the court house, and soon told them who I was, and what was my errand. The woman of the house asked me a few questions, and in a little time wished to know if I had a liberal education. I told her I had just education enough to carry me through the country. I got a man to go with me to see two of the principal men of the town, in order to get permission to preach in the court-house. The first said he had no objection; the other said he was very willing. However, he asked me if I had a liberal education. I told him I had nothing to boast of, though I had education enough to carry me through the country. Then I went to the court house, and desired the schoolmaster to send word, by his scholars, that I was to preach at 6 o'clock. He said he would, but he did not think many would attend. I waited till after the time, and no one came; at last I went and opened the door, and sat down."

Chilling prospects, certainly, for a flaming mind like his, burning with the magnificent idea of founding in these Eastern States a new religious organization, which, in half a century, was to dot their surface with its chapels, and scatter over their hills and valleys its seven hundred ministerial heralds. Most men, placed in Lee's circumstances, as he sat solitary in the village school-house, would have perceived in his project an absurdity no less ludicrous than was the grandeur of the design. Not so this man of God. Even here a ray of hope, at least, dawns on him. "At length," he says, "the school-master and three or four women came. I began to sing, and in a little time thirty or forty collected. Then I preached on Rom. 6: 23: 'For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' I felt a good deal of satisfaction in speaking. My soul was happy in the Lord, and I could not but bless God that he gave me to feel for the souls of those that heard me. The people were very solemn towards the end of the sermon, and several of them afterwards expressed, in my hearing, their great satisfaction in hearing the discourse. After Mrs. Penfield came back to the tavern, she pressed me much to call the next day and preach at her sister's who, she said, was much engaged in religion, and would be much pleased with my manner of preaching. This appeared to be an opening of the Lord; so I told her I would. I stayed all night, and prayed with the family, who were very kind, and would not charge me any thing, but asked me to call again."

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* Rev. Elijah Woolsey. † Letter of Rev. W. C. Hoyt (of Norwalk, Con.) to the writer.

The prospect brightens the next day. God had prepared for him a little band of congenial spirits, who had been praying and waiting for the arrival of such a message of salvation as he now bore to the East. "Cast thy bread upon the waters," says the wise man, "for thou shalt find it after many days." Rev. Mr. Black, a distinguished Wesleyan preacher, had arrived in New England, some years before, and preached with success in Boston and other places. He made an excursion into the interior, and penetrated as far as this part of Connecticut. He probably had no thought, that in this transient visit, he was preparing the way for the laborious founder of Methodism in the East. The seed he casually scattered, had, however, sprung up, and Lee was now welcomed by a few inquiring spirits who had been led, by the instrumentality of Black, to seek for a higher religious life than prevailed around them. Referring to the request of the lady just mentioned, he says:

"Friday, 19th, I rode to Timothy Wheeler's, about four miles, and after delivering a letter to the woman of the house from her sister, Mrs. Penfield, she read it, and seemed much rejoiced that I had come. She then began to tell me how it had been with them, and said there were a few of them that met once a week to sing and pray together; but they were much discouraged by their elder friends, and that they had been wishing and praying for some one to come and instruct them and seemed to believe that God had sent me. At length she said she was so rejoiced that her strength had almost left her, and sitting down, she began to weep. Mr. Black, one of our preachers, had been there a few years before, and some of the people had been wishing for the Methodists ever since. They spread the news as much as they could, and at 7 o'clock the people met, and I preached to an attentive congregation. After meeting, some of the people stayed to talk to me about religion, and wished to be instructed in the ways of the Lord. I think five or six of them are truly awakened; one, I think, has experienced a change of heart; but those under distress would be often saying they were afraid they had never been awakened. I told them, if they saw that they were in danger of hell, and felt a desire to be born again, they might know that they were truly awakened."

On Sunday, 21st, we find him at New Haven, the Athens of the State. It was a stormy day, but he preached in the court-house, at 5 o'clock, to a considerable congregation, on Amos 5: 6: '*Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall live.*' Among his auditors were the President of the College, many of the students, and a Congregational clergyman of the place. "I spoke," he says, "as if I had no doubt but God would reach the hearts of the hearers by the discourse. The people paid great attention to what I said, and several expressed their satisfaction. Mr. Jones asked me to go to tea with him, which invitation I accepted. While together, I told him much of our plan.

"Wednesday, 24th, I travelled a stony road to Redding, and according to directions, called on Esq. Benedict, but he was not at home; so I got my horse and rode to Mr. Rogers', to consult him about the matter. While I was talking to him, Mr. Bartlett, a Congregational minister, came by, and being informed who I was, asked me home with him. After I had been there a while, he asked me some questions relative to doctrines, and I endeavored to inform him what kind of doctrines we preached. He said he could not invite me into the meeting-house, because I held what he thought was contrary to the gospel. I told him I did not expect an invitation to preach in the meeting-house, but if I was asked, I should not refuse. However, Mr. Rogers sent his son down in a little time to let me know that there was a school-house that I could preach in, so I made the appointment for the people at 6 o'clock. Having met at that hour, I preached on Isa. 55: 6: 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,' &c. I bless God that I had some liberty in preaching. The old minister, at whose house I lodged, is a great advocate for dancing, although he does not practice it himself."

It was at Redding that the second class formed by Lee in New England was organized before the end of the present year. Thence he rode to Danbury, and obtained permission to preach in the court-house, twice on the same day. From Danbury he went to Ridgefield, where he was permitted to preach in the town-house. He also visited Rockwell, in Wilton Parish, Canaan, Middlesex, Norwalk, Fairfield, and had some hope that the Lord owned the word preached at each of these places.

On Friday, 3d July, he reached Stratfield, and found another little company of devout and congenial minds, whose sympathy cheered him in his solitary course. He says: — "I preached at Stratfield, at the house of Deacon Hawley. The house was filled with hearers. I had great satisfaction in preaching, and some of the people were melted into tears. I felt my soul transported with joy; and it appeared to me that God was about to do great things for the neighborhood. There are about a dozen in the place that meet every week for the purpose of conversing on the subject of religion, and of spending some time in prayer. They desired me to meet with them in the evening, to which I consented. I spoke to them just as I would at one of our class-meetings, and it was a very comfortable time. The greater part of them kneeled down when we went to prayer; a thing that I suppose some of them never did before in public. They all seemed exceedingly pleased with the manner of the meeting; several thanked me for my advice, and desired me to remember them in my prayers. The deacon's wife told me that some of them had an intention of joining us. I told her if they desired it I could not object, though I did not intend to persuade them. I hope the Lord will direct, bless, and save them."

The next day he was on his way to Stratford, the principal village of the town in which was formed, in less than a year from the present date, the first Methodist Society of his new circuit. Yet we find him approaching it with extreme misgivings:

"Saturday, 4th, I set off about the middle of the day, and was much exercised about calling to preach at Stratford. Sometimes I seemed to have no faith; but at other times had a little hope that good might be done. At last I determined to take up my cross and make the trial. So I went, put up at a tavern, and calling on the man that kept the key of the town-house, obtained his consent to preach in the house. But he said he did not know much about the Methodists; they might be like the New Lights. I told him I did not know much about the latter, but some people said we favored them in our preaching. 'Well, (says he,) 'if you are like them, I would not wish to have any thing to do with you.' I let a man have my horse, to ride through town, and give the people notice of meeting. At sunset, they rung the church bell, and the people collected. The Congregationalists insisted on my going into the meeting-house, but I begged off for that time. I had a large company in the town-house. I preached on Eph. 5: 1: 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.' I was much assisted in speaking; I felt happy in the Lord, and comforted to see the people so attentive. When I was done, Mr. Solomon Curtis came to me, asked me to go and lodge with him, and wished me to make it my home. Another said he would conduct me to the house, and taking me by the hand, he walked all the way by my side. I don't know that I have had so much kindness showed me in a new place since I came to the State."

This hospitality of Mr. Curtis was not, however, proof against his polemical predilections, as we shall see hereafter, in a somewhat ludicrous example of his tenacity for Puritanical orthodoxy.

On the following day he was again at New Haven. The State House bell was rung, and the people assembled there to hear him, but some influential citizens, having procured for him a Congregational chapel, induced him and his hearers to go into it. He proclaimed there his message from the text, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." "In a little time," he says, "I felt the fire from above; my heart was warmed, and drawn out in love to my hearers. I felt great liberty toward the last and some of the people dropped several silent tears, and the countenances of many showed that the word reached their hearts. I had two of the Congregational ministers to hear me; Mr. Austin, the minister of the house, and Dr. Edwards, son of the former President of Princeton College. After meeting, I came out, and some told me they were much pleased with the discourse; but no man asked me home with him. I went back to the tavern, retired into a room, went to prayer, and felt the Lord precious to my soul. I did believe the Lord had sent me there. If so, I was sure to find favor in the eyes of some of the people. In a little time Mr. David Beacher came, asked me to go home with him, and said he would be willing to entertain me when I came to town again. I went home with him, and his wife was very kind; but his wife is not a friend of Calvinism. After dark, a young woman got her work and set down to knitting; I was, indeed, much astonished at this, it being Sunday evening, and spoke to her about it. They told me it was customary for the Congregationalists throughout the State, to commence the Sabbath on Saturday evening, and continue it until sunset on Sunday."

On Wednesday, the 8th, he was once more in Redding, and met again Rev. Mr. Bartlett, the pugnacious Congregationalist, who, with the spirit then, and still, to some extent, characteristic of New England, insisted upon vexatious questions of doctrines. "The minister," he writes, "and a few other people, came in, and wanted to enter into a conversation about principles, and inquired what kind of doctrines we held; but I said little to them. At length the people requested the minister to give me leave to preach in the meeting-house; but he said he was not willing, and should not give his consent; but if the people chose it, he should not stop it. Then he asked me if I would be willing to take a text and preach my principles fully, for the people wanted to know them. I told him I was not willing to do it at that time, and intimated to him that if I preached I would wish to preach on a subject that I thought would be most for the glory of God, and the good of the hearers; and that I did not believe a sermon on principles would be for the glory of God, at that time. He then wanted to talk about Christian perfection, and said there was no perfection in this life. I made mention of a few texts of Scripture, which put him to a stand. The room was by that time quite full of people, and he asked me again, before them all, if I would preach upon my principles? I looked upon it, that he asked me before so many, that he might have it to say that I refused to let my principles be known, because they were too bad to be heard; so I told him, if I found freedom, I would on a future day appoint a time for the purpose, and preach fully on the subject. He observed that some of the people would come to hear me out of curiosity. Here some were offended because I preached the possibility of being suddenly changed from a state of sin to a state of grace."

On Wednesday, 29th July, he preached in Fairfield again. The next day he visited Dr. Dwight at his Seminary in Greenfield. The Doctor treated him with cool politeness, evidently doubting the expediency of his mission. August 5, he preached at Newfield, in the house of a liberal hearted deacon, with much effect. He writes: — "There has been a great deal said against us since I was here last week. The people are much alarmed with a fear that I will break up the society. One of their ministers told the people in public, that the Methodists held *damnable principles*, &c. All their fears of the large society being broken up proceed from no other circumstance than this: — two women talk of joining our society, but they are unable to tell when. Surely, if these people knew that God was on their side, they would not fear so much.

"Thursday, 6th, I went to Mr. Well's, and a Calvinist came to converse with me for a while; after talking over our different sentiments, we joined in prayer, and parted. Then I rode to Redding, about sixteen or seventeen miles. I have seldom travelled so bad a road on dry ground as that was. The day was uncommonly warm; sometimes I could hardly bear the steam that arose from my horse; and, poor creature, he sweated till my great coat, four double, and my saddle bags, were wet through. When I got to Mr. Sanford's I felt very weary, but had only a little time to rest. In a few minutes I walked to Mr. Rogers', and preached to a large number of people, within and without doors. The people in this place can bear to hear any vice spoken against, except dancing.

"Thursday, 13th, we rode to Fairfield, at an hour by sun. I preached on Proverbs 23: 13: 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.' I had some satisfaction in speaking to the people, and they were attentive to the word. But some of the inhabitants seemed to be afraid to hear, because the minister did not like my coming amongst them. Even the tavern keeper and his wife, were I always put up, made an excuse to leave home before I came ; and the reason, I understood, was because the minister complained of them for entertaining me."

These ludicrous instances of sectarian shyness, so characteristic of the period, were of frequent occurrence, but he braved them with stout determination. He met with a repetition of them the next day, at Stratfield. "At 4 o'clock," he writes, "I preached on 1 Peter, 3 : 12 : 'For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers.' I felt an humbling sense of the goodness of God while I was speaking. Some of the people heard with watery eyes. I hope God will soon revive his work in this place, for the devil begins to roar. After meeting I observed that some of the people that always came and spoke to me, went away and took no notice of me ; and no person gave me an invitation to his house, which was an uncommon thing, for formerly I had various invitations. But I understood that they had been buffeted by the ministers from the pulpit, and by their acquaintance in private, till they hardly knew what to do. One minister had been trying for two or three times, in his sermons, to prove that a man could not fall from grace ; and another turned loose upon us, and said, from the pulpit, there were six hundred of us, going about the country, preaching damnable doctrines, and picking men's pockets. One of the deacons of the meeting did not like it ; he advertised the minister in the public paper, and informed the public how he persecuted us. This noise is not without a cause. I hardly ever knew much persecution were the people were at ease in Zion.

"Sunday, 16th, we rode to Milford, and preached in the town-house, and endeavored to show the necessity of a preparation to meet God. The house was crowded with people, and some of them appeared to be persons of note; they were very attentive to what was spoken and tears stole down from several eyes, while solemnity sat upon their countenances. I felt great liberty in telling the people what it was to be prepared to meet God, and the comfortable consequence of such a preparation. I hope my labors will not be in vain in the Lord at this place. When I was done, I came through the crowd, mounted my horse and set off, without having any invitation to call at any man's house. *This is the third time I have preached at this place, and have not yet become acquainted with any person.* If I can but be useful, I am willing to remain unknown among men. We then rode to Mr. Gilbert's, in New Haven. He and his wife appear to be God-fearing people."

This last example was certainly less offensive than the preceding cases, but could scarcely have occurred among any other Christian people than the excellent but frigid New England Calvinists of that day. Such treatment, chilling as it was, could not, however, damp the ardor of the noble evangelist. — The next day he exclaims, "I bless God that he keeps my spirits up under all my discouragements. If the Lord did not comfort me in hoping against hope, or believing against appearances, I should depart from the work in this part of the world; but I still wait to see the salvation of the Lord."

Having spent about three months in Connecticut, and surveyed the ground for an extensive circuit,* to be occupied by assistants whom he hoped would come from the South to his aid, he departed on another exploring tour, which was attended with more agreeable auspices.

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* This first Methodist circuit in New England included Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, Milford, Reading, Danbury, Canaan, with some intermediate villages.

"Monday, 31st," [August,] he writes, "I set out on a tour for Rhode Island State, and it was my fervent prayer to God, that if my undertaking was not according to his will, the houses of the people might be shut against me; but if my journey was right, that God would open the houses and hearts of the people to receive me at my coming."

God did open both the hearts and the houses of the people for him. He left New Haven after dinner, and had got but a little way from town before he fell in with a gentleman who was riding nine or ten miles on his way. He appeared to be a religious man, and encouraged Lee to go on to Guilford, and call on Lieutenant Hopson. He did so. Mr. Hopson met him at the gate, and as soon as he dismounted, said to him, "I hope you are a brother in Christ." "I told him," writes Mr. Lee, "who I was, what I was, and whither I was going. It was then about sunset; but he sent word to his neighbors, and soon collected a room full of people, to whom I preached. I felt my soul alive to God among these strangers, and some of them wept freely. Of a truth I perceive God is no respecter of persons. I found some lively Christians in Guilford, of the Baptist persuasion, and could bless God that I came amongst them."

He passed on rapidly, preaching and making appointments at Killingsworth, Saybrook, and Lyme, and on the third day of his tour entered New London, and "put up" at the house of Jonathan Brooks. "I told him," says Mr. Lee, "who I was and that I had a desire to preach in the city at night. He immediately sent word among the people, and at night they collected at the State House. My heart was much drawn out to God while I was declaring the necessity of the new birth. Deep solemnity rested upon the audience, and some of the dear hearers wept greatly. I felt as if I was among the faithful followers of the Lord Jesus. My cry was, surely God is in this place. I had a large company of people of different ranks and professions. Every thing seems to prove that my journey is of God. O, Lord, never let me blush to own thy name!"

He was away, again, the next day, for Rhode Island. "I passed," he says, "through Stonington, and crossed Pawtucket, into Rhode Island State, and went to Mr. Stanton's, who kept the coffee house in Charleston, Washington County. He was not at home, but his wife being a religious woman, I entered into conversation with her, and soon informed her that my business in coming was to preach to the people. So she sent word to her neighbors, and gathered a large room full, to whom I preached on Rev. 3: 20: 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock,' &c. I felt some liberty in speaking to them, and some were melted into tears under the word."

Having spent, since he left New Haven, about a week in sounding the alarm through these regions, and in opening the way for future laborers, he returned to the first scene of his labors in Connecticut. He thus records his feelings on concluding his excursion in Rhode Island:

"Monday, 7th Sept. I have found great assistance from the Lord, of late. Sometimes I have had no doubt but that the word was owned and blessed of the Lord. To-day I have preached four times, and felt better at the conclusion of my labor than I did when I first arose in the morning. I have found a great many Baptists in this part of the country, who are lively in religion. They are mostly different from those I have formerly been acquainted with; for these will let men of all persuasions commune with them, if they believe they are in favor with the Lord. I think the way is now open for our preachers to visit this part of the land. It is the wish of many that I should stay, and they beg that I would return again as soon as possible, although they never saw a Methodist before. I am the first preacher of our way that has ever visited this part of the country."

On Wednesday, 16th, he was again proclaiming his message at Redding, on his Connecticut circuit, from the words, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." He spoke with power and assurance, and ventured to attack the prevalent theology, "bearing," as he says, "a solemn testimony against the doctrine which so generally prevails in this part of the world, which, in substance, is this: 'The sinner must repent, and he can't repent; and he will go to hell if he don't repent:' or, as a lawyer expressed it in my hearing, 'you must believe or be damned; and you can't believe if you are to be damned.'"

On Friday, the 25th, he preached at Stratfield. After the sermon, he conducted "*a kind of class-meeting*," composed of about twenty persons. It was the first class-meeting held on the circuit, and led to the formation, the next day, of the *First Class*, composed of three women, who, he says, "appeared willing to bear the cross, and have their names cast out as evil, for the Lord's sake." * The women that ministered to Christ were "last at the cross and first at the sepulchre." Let it ever be remembered that the first organic form of Methodism in New England, under the labors of Lee, consisted exclusively of devoted women. Their sex have ever since worthily sustained in the church this first and peculiar honor. Among the Romans, senators and emperors were often the supreme pontiffs of religion, but consecrated women — the vestal virgins — kept alive the undying fire.

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* This has been supposed to be the first Methodist class formed in Connecticut, (see Bangs' History of Methodism, Anno 1789.) There were, however, before Lee's visit to N. England, small classes at Stomford and Sharon (letter of Rev. Aaron Hunt, to the writer.) They were connected with circuits in New York. "But it should be understood," writes our informant "that those classes, or parts of classes, though in the borders of Connecticut were by no means considered New England *Societies*. They were parts of societies which existed within New York. It might be said that because Black and Garrettson passed through parts of New England and preached in them, therefore Lee was not the pioneer of Methodism in this country: but the fact is, that not till the day of Lee did we enter that field to cultivate it." Lee really laid the foundations of Methodism in New England and the classes at Stratfield and Redding were the first in the series of societies which sprung from his labors.

Since his arrival in New England, three months of incessant labors and vexatious rebuffs had passed, and but three women were organized into the new church which was "to spread Scriptural holiness over the land!" "A Quixotic project, surely!" Not so thought the unwearied evangelist. He had the faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and before its hopeful vision all these hills and vallies stood forth white unto the harvest. He gave thanks, mounted his horse, the only companion of his laborious travels, and went forth to new trials and greater achievements.

He soon after met with another example of the characteristic tenacity for theological opinions which we have already several times witnessed, and instances of which were almost daily incidents of his journeys. We have seen that he was entertained very hospitably by a Mr. C——, at Stratford. On his present visit to that place, he met the following reception: — "When I went in, his wife did not ask me to sit down; however, I took a seat. In a little time, she asked me to drink tea, but I had no need. Her husband came in and spoke to me, but did not appear so friendly as formerly. At dark, I asked Mrs. C. if her husband was going to meeting. She said '*she guessed not;*' so I went to the town-house alone, and was hard put to it to get a candle, but I bless God, I felt quite resigned, and not ashamed to own my Lord. After preaching, I returned to Mr. C.'s, and found he had but little to say. He went to prayer without saying any thing to me, and then I waited to see if he would ask me to go to bed. After some time he got up and asked me to cover up the fire when I went to bed. I told him I would go to bed then, if it were agreeable. I suppose the whole complaint was owing to my telling him, when I was there before, that I believed a man, after being converted, might fall away and be lost; for he is a stiff antinomian. The next morning he lay in bed till late, and soon after he arose, I set out, without family prayer or breakfast. I often wonder that I am not turned out of doors."

The influence of the clergy and deacons in the several parishes which composed his circuit, was used most strenuously to disaffect the people against him. At his next appointment, Greenwich, the prejudice thus excited was so general that he deemed it expedient to desist from further visits to it. There were about forty-five clergymen within the range of his circuit, most of whom seem to have been thoroughly alarmed at the solitary stranger. "Poor priests!" he writes, "they seem like frightened sheep when I come near them, and the general cry is, 'the societies will be broken up.'" Accustomed as they had been to consider themselves the legalized church of the land, they were astonished at his bold intrusion, and the standard of experimental religion was too low to admit of an appreciation of his message. The next insertion in his journal refers to the same obstacle, attended, however, by a different result.

"Friday, 23d Oct. At David Olds', in Weston, I preached to a large congregation; the house was much crowded, though it was very large. I suppose the reason why I had so many to hear me was owing to their ministers preaching against me two Sabbaths in succession. The people heard me with great attention, and many tears were shed. I had reason to praise God, that I felt my soul happy in his love. I generally find, in this State, that when I am most opposed, I have the most hearers. The Lord seems to bring good out of evil. If my sufferings will tend to the furtherance of the gospel, I think I feel willing to suffer; but if I had no confidence in God, and as many as at present to oppose me, I believe I should soon leave these parts. But once in a while I meet with something to encourage me, and by means of the grace of God I stand."

The persistent patience with which he almost daily brooked the peculiar and chilling rebuffs we have described, may well excite our admiration, but, in contrast with this hardihood of purpose, his journals abound in affecting expressions of thankfulness for the occasional indications of kindness he met, however humble they might be. After preaching at Fairfield, on a cold, wintry night, Dec. 24, he exclaimed: — "To-night, thanks be to God, I was invited by a widow woman to put up at her house. This is the first invitation I have had since I first came to the place, which is between six and seven months. O my Lord, send more laborers into this part of thy vineyard. I love to break up new ground, and hunt the lost souls in New England, though it is hard work; but when Christ is with me, hard things are made easy, and rough ways made smooth."

Monday, the 28th of December, though in these prosperous times it may appear a "day of small things," was another signal day in the history of his mission — the date of the second society formed by him in the State. "I preached," he writes, "in Redding, and found great assistance from the Lord in speaking. I felt that God was among the people. One or two kneeled down with me when we prayed. The lion begins to roar very loud, in this place, a sure sign that he is about to lose some of his subjects. *I joined two in society, for a beginning. A man who has lately received a witness of his being in favor with the Lord, led the way; and a woman, who, I hope, was lately converted, followed.*"

The venerable historian of Methodism informs us that the former was Mr. Aaron Sandford, who afterwards became a local preacher, and continues such to this day, having lived to see his children, and many of his grand-children, members of the church, with a large and influential society gathered around him. He has a son, a son-in-law, and a grand-son, in the ministry.*

About seven months of indefatigable toil had passed, and but two classes, with an aggregate of five members, were formed. Quixotic! would the cool calculator again exclaim, reasoning from sight, and not by faith; but, "Glory be to God!" writes the laborious preacher of Methodism, on forming this class of two members, "Glory be to God, that I now begin to see *some fruit* of my labor in this barren part of the world." And he departed on his way to other toils, exclaiming again, "Glory be to God that he ever called me to work in his vineyard, and sent me to seek and to feed the sheep of his fold in New England. Sometimes I feel my heart so much drawn out in warm desires for the people, that I forget my dear friends and relations; and if it were not for the duty I owe my parents, and the great desire they have to see me, I think I could live and die in this part of the world. The Lord only knows the difficulties I have had to wade through, yet his grace is sufficient for me; when I pass through the fire and water, he is with me; and rough ways are smooth, when Jesus bears me in his arms."

Fanaticism could never have thus sustained him, amidst such peculiar trials. It would have chilled and expired for lack of inspiration. He was supported by the consciousness that Methodism was needed in New England, and would, therefore, sooner or later, be divinely prospered, and by remarkable communications of grace and consolation from on high, such as he describes, amidst the inclemencies of a bleak, wintry day, about this time. " I sat out," he writes, " and my soul was transported with joy ; the snow falling, the wind blowing, prayer ascending, faith increasing, grace descending, heaven smiling, and love abounding."

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, vol. 1, book 3, chap. 2

On the 28th of January, 1790, he formed the third class organized on the circuit. " I preached," he says, " at Jacob Wheeler's, in Limestone, and, after meeting, formed a class, two men and two women. Perhaps these may be like the leaven hid in three measures of meal, that may leaven the whole neighborhood, and many may be brought to say, I will go with this people, because we have heard that God is with them."

He continued his untiring labors, journeying and preaching daily, without the aid or sympathy of a single colleague, until the 27th of February, 1790, when he received, at Dantown, the unexpected and joyful intelligence that three preachers were on their way to join him. After the preceding review of his solitary labors and struggles, we can appreciate the simple but touching description of their arrival, which he recorded at the time :— " Just before the time of meeting, a friend informed me that there were three preachers coming from a distance to labor with me in New England. I was greatly pleased at the report, and my heart seemed to reply, ' blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' When I saw them riding up, I stood and looked at them, and could say from my heart, ' thou hast well done, that thou art come.' Brother Jacob Brush, an elder, and George Roberts and Daniel Smith, two young preachers, came from Maryland, to assist me in this part of the world. No one knows, but God and myself, what comfort and joy I felt at their arrival. Surely, the Lord has had respect unto my prayers, and granted my request."

He was holding a Quarterly Meeting, in a partly finished church, the second Methodist one erected in New England, at the time of the arrival of these brethren at Dantown. Mutually comforted and enlivened by the interview, they entered with renewed zeal upon their labors, and during the services the next day, (Sabbath,) "the power of the Lord," says the historian of Methodism, "was so manifested that many cried aloud for mercy; a thing so unusual in that part of the country that some were very much alarmed, and fled from the house in consternation; and others who were in the gallery, jumped out on the ground. In the midst, however, of the confusion occasioned by these movements, those who had an experience of divine things rejoiced with exceeding great joy."*

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, Anno 1790.

# CHAPTER IV.

## LEE AND HIS CO-LABORERS IN NEW ENGLAND.

**The first New England Methodist Ministry — Jacob Brush — Sketch of his History— His Death — Daniel Smith — His Character — Description of his Preaching — Farewell Sermon at Lynn — Dr. George Roberts — Outline of his History — Anecdotes — His Character — Triumphant Death.**

We have traced the labors of Lee in New England, down to the arrival of his first co-laborers. Let us now direct our eye upon the small but heroic phalanx in their new field.

Jesse Lee, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith, memorable names in the records of the church, were, then, in the spring of 1790, the Methodist ministry of New England. There were more preachers than classes and scarcely more than two members to each preacher; but they looked and labored for the future, and we and our children now testify to the wisdom of their hopes.

The first of this little band of heroic evangelists has been fully introduced to the reader. We regret that our information respecting the others is limited to few and slight sources.

Jacob Brush was an Elder when he came to New England — the only one among the N. E. preachers. Messrs. Smith and Roberts were yet young men, and Mr. Lee, from diffidence of himself, had hitherto refused ordination. Mr. Brush was a native of Long Island. He entered the itinerancy in 1783, and was appointed to the Trenton (N. J.) circuit.[*] The ensuing four years he labored extensively in New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. Leaving the Dover and Duck Creek circuit, (Del.,) in the spring of 1790, to visit and assist the laborious Lee, he continued in Connecticut till the New York Conference of October, 1790, when he was appointed to the New Rochelle circuit, where he travelled also the following year, till about the middle of July. He then took charge of a District which included Long Island, other portions of New York, and the State of Connecticut as far East as the Connecticut River, and as far North as the city of Hartford, sharing with Lee (who was Presiding Elder, the same year, of Boston District) the entire Presiding Eldership of New England. His labors in New England, while Presiding Elder, were limited to one year's superintendence of this large District. His District the following year was wholly in the State of New York. He was subsequently a supernumerary in New York city, till his death, in 1795. He was "an active man of God," say the old Minutes, "a great friend to order and union." Notwithstanding a chronic inflammation of the throat, which interfered with his usefulness, he exerted himself much in his labors. His illness was very severe, and his last hours attended by stupor and loss of speech. A ministerial brother, taking him by the hand, inquired if he still enjoyed the peace of God; not being able to speak, he affectionately pressed the hand of his friend, with an expression on his countenance of calm resignation to God. "We entertain no doubt," say his fellow laborers, who knew and loved him well, "that he rests in Abraham's bosom." [†]

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[*] Minutes, 1785. [†] Ibid, 1796.

Daniel Smith was born in Philadelphia, February 4th, 1769, and entered the ministry when he was about nineteen years of age.* He is reported in the Minutes of 1790 as continued on trial, but we cannot trace his position, either as it respects his relation to the Conference or his field of labor, the preceding year.

"In that early day," says one who knew him, "just succeeding the turmoils of the war, after the Revolution, few Theological Seminaries, and indeed hardly any other Seminaries of learning were to be found in the country, and it required great personal effort for a young minister to acquire so much information as to appear with even tolerable respectability before an audience. This effort on his part was not wanting. The field then was the world, for we find him laboring within a very short period of time at Charleston, S. C., and at Lynn, Mass., thus making a journey of more than a thousand miles, and that, too, when the comfort of rail-road and steam-boat travelling was not dreamed of, and there were few or no stage-coaches. And in one of these travels he suffered shipwreck and came near losing his life, on the Ocracock bar, off the coast of North Carolina. But a gracious Providence preserved him."†

In 1791, he was admitted into full connection by the Conference, and appointed, with John Bloodgood, to Lynn, Mass. In 1792, he was ordained an elder, and returned to the South, where he continued to labor until 1794, when he is reported, in the Minutes, among those "who are under a location, through weakness of body, or family concerns." We trace him no farther in the annual records of the Minutes.‡ He was signally useful while in New England. An excellent judge, who was accustomed to hear him, places him with Jesse and John Lee, "in the first rank" of the early Methodist ministry.* His address in the pulpit was not adapted to excite violent emotion, but to conciliate, persuade, and soothe. The venerable Thomas Ware, himself a pioneer of Methodism in Western New England, records a remark of Asbury, that "Daniel Smith had a faster hold on the affections of the Eastern people, than any other preacher who had ever been sent among them." Ware pronounces him among the "eminent men" "whose memory was precious to many who had profitted by their ministry, and who were spoken of in terms of great respect and tenderness." † Placing him by the side of the eloquent Hope Hull, who came to the East the next year, he says that "scarcely could two other men have been found, so well suited to second the efforts of Mr. Lee, in the Eastern States."

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* Rich. Chris. Advocate, Jan. 1847. † Ibid.

‡ Except, we believe, a single instance, the deaths of located preachers are not reported in the Minutes.

"He was," says Rev. Enoch Mudge, "a man of a humble, sweet spirit, and a very good and useful preacher. No one of his time was more beloved. He always spoke feelingly, for the obvious reason that he always lived under a deep, feeling sense of the presence of God, and of the importance of personal religion. The people of Lynn, Boston, and vicinity, who knew him, were ardently attached to him. It was a day of weeping with us when he left Lynn. He gave an afternoon lecture in the newly erected and unfinished meeting-house, and then left, to lecture at Malden in the evening.

"In his last address at the former place, fearing, as he said, that he had not presented *all* the truth as he ought to have done, and that there might be some present whom he had not warned of their danger, who might cry peace when there was no peace, he felt it his duty, however repugnant to his feelings, to address them from Rev. 14: 10, 11: 'The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lord. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the marks of his name.' The terrors of the Lord were so mingled with tears and tender feelings, that it forcibly reminded me of Christ's pathetic and moving address over Jerusalem. With him, there were no efforts at great sermons; his one all-absorbing purpose was to win souls to Christ.

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* Letter of Rev. Enoch Mudge, to the Writer.

† Memoirs of Rev. T. Ware, Chap. viii.

"The general tenor of his preaching was experimental, winning, and affecting. He often was deeply affected with his own subjects, and with tears entreated sinners to be reconciled to God. I remember to have heard him preach from the text in Jer. 8: 22: 'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the daughter of my people healed?' The heart must have been as adamant, that did not melt and relent under that sermon.

"It was under his preaching that my brother, John Mudge, was brought into the liberty of the gospel. His text that evening was, 2 Cor., 13: 5; 'Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith,' &c. This was a memorable time. There was joy on earth and in heaven. I have joy in thinking of it now. Mr. Smith's name is found among the most useful of the local preachers in New York, for years." *

On returning from the East, Mr. Smith was stationed by Bishop Asbury in the city of New York, then one of the

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* Letters to the Writer.

most important stations and the oldest in the United States. He now applied himself to the study of the Hebrew tongue, under the late Dr. Kunze. His able colleagues were Rev. Thomas Morrell, Rev. Thomas Sargeant, and Rev. George Roberts. Here it was also that he was united in marriage, in the year 1794, to Hester, the daughter of the late Abraham Russel, one of the oldest and most respected members of the M. E. Church, and for many years a representative of the city in the Legislature of the State. This marriage was most auspicious; and of the unostentatious piety, great intelligence and many virtues of his affectionate consort, a volume might be written. Mr. Smith, having now located, superadded to his ministerial labors the responsible duties of a citizen. It would not be doing justice to the character thus feebly delineated, were not his sterling patriotism to be adverted to. Born and nurtured during the stirring scenes of the Revolution, nothing that affected the good of his country or her institutions was matter of indifference to him. He was often called upon to express his opinions on questions of a public nature, and did not hesitate, on all proper occasions, to do so. It is known, too, that the partiality of his fellow citizens would have conferred on him Congressional honors had he consented to accept them. With powers of mind of no common order, strengthened and enriched by constant use and industry, Mr. Smith continued to minister with great acceptance to large congregations in the city of New York, to the end of his life; he died on the 23d of October, 1815. His last sermon, preached in John street, about a fortnight before, was on the "Worth of the soul;" his discourse from the text, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul." — Matt. 16: 26.*

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* Richmond Christian Advocate, Jan. 1847.

Thomas Ware, often speaking of Lee and Hope Hull in strong terms, remarks as follows of Smith and his co-laborer, Roberts: "There were others no less beloved and accredited than they; two of these, viz., Daniel Smith and George Roberts, were spoken of as richly imbued with grace and gifts. For it was said of the most learned men in these parts that none could extemporise with either of these unassuming Methodist itinerants; and all men have a predilection for sermons preached, rather than read. And when these people, who had seldom heard a sermon delivered without notes, found a man who could readily preach without a book, he became an object of their admiration. Smith and Roberts could command the attention and respect of any intelligent and sober audience, and frequently their admiration and love. The truth that had made them free, and that God who had commissioned them to preach with a power which sinners could not resist, silenced all the objections raised against them on the charge of incompetency by the one class, and lack of Episcopal ordination by another. The hearts and doors of many were open to them, and having through their instrumentality been made to know the blessedness of believing, they were received as the accredited messengers of Heaven, and for them was felt a tie of affection stronger than the ties of blood." *

As usual in those days, he located, for the support of his family, but continued, as we have seen, to preach laboriously till his death. He prospered in business and became wealthy. Dr. Bangs' says, "I knew him well in his located state. He died of the cholera morbus in 1815. He was a very able preacher and died in peace." † His old friend and fellow la-

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* Letter quoted in the Richmond Christian Advocate, Jan. 1847.

† Letter to the Writer.

borer, Ware, who was stationed in New York at the time, preached his funeral sermon. One who heard it says, "most touching was it to witness his emotion on that memorable occasion. The distance of more than thirty years in the dim past, seeming but as yesterday to the mind's eye of the writer, who was present and witnessed it. He wept for him, like Jonathan and David, because he loved him as he loved his own soul.*

Dr. GEORGE ROBERTS' name is "like ointment poured forth," in the church; yet few records remain of his long and devoted life. He left not among his papers six lines respecting himself. Of his birth and parentage we know nothing definitely, as his relatives, distant or near, except his descendants, have long since passed away.† It is supposed that he was a native of Easton, Talbot county, Eastern shore of Maryland. It is possible, however, that he was born in England, and brought by his parents to this country in his infancy. After laboring for some time, with extensive usefulness, as an exhorter and local preacher, in Talbot and adjacent counties, he joined the travelling ministry, in 1790. His first appointment was on Annamessex circuit, Md., but he left it the same year, as we have seen, to accompany Daniel Smith to New England, where he continued until the autumn of 1796, laboring most indefatigably on Stratford circuit in 1790 and Middlefields and Hartford circuits during the years 1791 and 1792, and the following four years on extensive Districts, as a Presiding Elder. His first District (1793–4) was the only one, at the time, in Connecticut, if we except a comparatively small tangent, reaching to one or two appointments, from a District which lay chiefly in the State of New York, and was travelled that year by Thomas Ware. His next scene of labor (1794–5) was a vast District, comprising nearly the whole State of Connecticut, and extending into Rhode Island, on the East, and to Vermont on the North. His District in 1795–6 lay mostly in the State of New York, but extended into Connecticut, and included the Redding circuit. This year terminated his labors in New England. His subsequent appointments were respectively in the city of New York, (where he continued three years,) Annapolis, Md., Baltimore, (two years,) Philadelphia, (two years,) Baltimore again, during two years, after which he located (1806) in the latter city, where he continued, we believe, to his death, in the practice of medicine, an eminently devoted, influential, and useful Christian and local preacher. Such were the labors and vicissitudes of this faithful ambassador of the Lord Jesus. He was especially useful in New England, by his diligence in organizing and disciplining societies. While his labors were thus onerous, he also shared fully with Lee and his other coadjutors in the privations and sufferings incident to their new field. "I once heard him say," writes his son, "that during the whole period of his labors in New England he never received over $40 per annum, from any source, circuits and conference dividends together. He never had more than one suit of clothes at once. I still have in my possession the thread and needle case which he used in mending his garments, with his own hands, in the woods, or behind a rock. On one occasion, Bishop Asbury punched his saddlebags with his cane, and said, 'Br. Roberts, where are your clothes?' His reply was, 'On my back, sir. I am ready to go whenever and wherever you please to direct, without returning to any appointment to gather up my garments.' He accompanied the Bishop, piloting him through New England, in his first visit to that portion of our country. Often has he entertained me with relations of the many feats and numerous obstacles of his New England mission."

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* Richmond Christian Advocate, Jan. 1847.

† Letter of his son, Dr. George C. W. Roberts, of Baltimore, to the Writer.

The person of Dr. Roberts was large and athletic, his manners exceedingly dignified, and, in social life, relieved by a subdued cheerfulness. To this dignity of manner, which well befitted his noble person, was added, in the pulpit, a most impressive and powerful persuasion. His sermons were systematic and digested, and in their application often overwhelming. Wherever he went, his presence at once commanded respect. The infidel and the scorner grew serious, or shrunk from before him, in either the public congregation or the conversational circle. A reckless skeptic once attempted, with the air of a champion, to engage him in a difficult discussion, in presence of a company of friends. Mr. Roberts heard him several minutes, without uttering a word, but as the bold gainsayer advanced in his scornful criticisms, the listening preacher's countenance and whole bearing assumed an expression of solemn scrutiny and dignity, which struck the bystanders with awe and made the skeptic quail. When he had concluded, Roberts placed his hand on the infidel's breast and with a look of resistless power exclaimed, "Sir, the conscience which God has placed within you refutes and confounds you." The rebuked scoffer trembled and fled from his presence. The fact illustrates, better than could pages of remark, the character of this mighty man of God.

He was not destitute of wit, on befitting occasions, and when used satirically, it had redoubled pungency from its contrast with his generally serious character. "He was a powerful and very successful preacher," writes a living veteran of the ministry. While he travelled in Connecticut, the Rev.

Dr. Williams, of Tolland, and Rev. Mr. Huntington, of Coventry, unitedly published a work against the new sect, in which they charged Bishop Asbury with duplicity, and many other equally unchristian traits. Dr. Roberts replied to them in a pamphlet of peculiar force. "I still recollect," says our last mentioned correspondent, "some of his severe sallies. He was a man of much native wit and of a ready tact at satire, when he had occasion for it."* He wrote, also, while in New England, a pamphlet on the Calvinistic controversy, which produced an impression on the opinions of the period.

His location was rendered necessary by the magnitude of his family, and was a matter of profound regret to him. He continued, however, to labor zealously in the local ministry, till his death. And what a spectacle did his end present! a scene of extreme physical anguish, of mental vigor coming forth with renovated power from successive shocks of dissolution, and of spiritual triumph never, perhaps, surpassed in the history of man.

"His last hours," writes his son," "were eminently triumphant, though eminently painful, physically. For twenty-four hours prior to his death, he had a most violent convulsion every ten minutes, by the watch; and for twenty-four hours preceding the last day, he had them every half hour. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that he came out of each with his intellect apparently more vigorous than when it seized him. During the intervals, he shouted aloud, almost every moment, the praises of redeeming grace. This fact was the more striking, from the consideration of his never having been known to exult much during his previous life. He was distinguished by the evenness and quiet of his temper and frame. A night or two previous to his dissolution I urged him to spare himself, and offered as a reason for it, the possibility of his disturbing the neighbors. He immediately replied, "Be quiet? my son: be quiet? my son! No, no! If I had the voice of an angel, I would rouse the inhabitants of Baltimore, for the purpose of telling the joys of redeeming love. Victory! Victory! Victory! through the blood of the Lamb!' 'Victory through the blood of the Lamb!' was the last sentence that trembled on his dying lips."

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* Letter from Rev. Asa Kent to the Writer.

Such were Jesse Lee's colleagues, in the spring of 1790. We have seen his joy as he "saw them riding up" at Dantown, and welcomed them with the benediction, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Scarcely had they arrived, when he commenced new journeys and labors. We will follow him in our next chapter.

# CHAPTER V.

## LEE ITINERATING IN NEW ENGLAND.

Excursion to Weathersfield — Labors at Hartford — Visits Farmington — Interest for "principles" — Forms the New Haven Circuit — Excursions — Passes through Rhode Island — Unexpected meeting with Garrettson — Tour of the latter — Lee arrives in Boston — Preaches at Salem, Newburyport, Portsmouth, Marblehead — Returns to Boston — Departs for the Conference — Reflections.

IMMEDIATELY on the arrival of his colleagues, Lee departed to survey new fields of labor. Much of Connecticut, and all the Eastern and Northern sections of New England, were yet unentered by the Methodist ministry. Cheered by the arrival of fellow laborers, and accompanied by one of them, he starts with unslackened energy to proclaim his message through these remoter regions. "On Wednesday, March 3d," he says, "Brother Brush went to see Br. Roberts, whom we had left behind sick, and Br. Smith and myself set out to the Eastward, leaving Br. Brush to supply my two-weeks circuit."

Sunday, 14th, we find him preaching at Weathersfield, in the North Brick School-house. "Some of the people," he remarks, "sensibly felt what I said, and tears ran down from their eyes. Glory be to God, that we were favored with the presence of Him who walked in the fiery furnace with his children. O, that the Lord may revive his work in this place! Here we met with a couple of old friends from Hartford, Mr. Thomas Hildrup, and Mr. Coop, who rejoiced to see us on our way to their city. They informed us that the Lord was reviving his work in Hartford. My soul rejoiced at the glad tidings, and I was ready to say, ‘Lord, we are well able to go up and possess the land.’ I left Br. Smith behind, to preach to the same congregation in the afternoon. I went on to Hartford, and put up at Mr. Winship’s, a private lodging prepared for me, by my two old friends. I was informed that several persons were awakened by my preaching, when I was here before. The hearing of this humbled my soul in the dust, and strengthened my faith. Ah, Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst own my labors and comfort my soul? Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory. At 2 o’clock they rang the bell, and we met in the State House. I preached on 1 Thess., 5: 19. I had a large company of hearers to speak to; and glory be to God for his goodness to me while speaking his word. I felt my soul happy in the Lord, the people heard with great attention, and with many tears. I felt as if the word had taken hold of the hearts of the hearers. The comfort I felt at this meeting was worth more than all the pleasures of this poor world.”

At night he was again sounding the alarm in the State House. The next day he spent in visiting “from house to house.” In the afternoon he held an inquiry or class-meeting, with some persons who came to talk of “the form and power of godliness;” but, “according to the New England custom, we spent,” he says, “a little time in talking about principles; especially the probability of men being lost after they are converted to God. We met again, at night, in the State House, where I preached on John 16: 20. I felt great freedom in preaching, from first to last. My eyes were often filled with tears, and sometimes I could hardly keep from weeping aloud. My soul fed upon the word, while I was endeavoring to feed the flock of God. We had more people in the State House this night than had ever been seen there on any occasion. They were very solemn and attentive, many of them were deeply affected, and wept bitterly under the word. It appeared to me that God was opening the way for us to be received by and greatly blessed to the people. After we broke up, several persons came and spoke to me, and begged my prayers. It has often been my prayer, of late, that if our undertaking in visiting these parts were according to the will of God, he would open the houses of the people to receive us, and their hearts to receive our instructions. Here my prayer is visibly answered. We have repeated invitations to call upon and lodge with the people; and they earnestly request our prayers, attend our ministry, and desire our advice. *My heart is drawn towards the people in the Eastern States. If the Lord opens the way before me, I think I shall visit them shortly.*"

The day following he was at Farmington, where he met another instance of New England interest for theological "principles." He was entertained with dinner by a Mr. W.—— "We had been there but a little time before the old man began to talk about principles, and the old lady to prepare dinner. We continued the discourse till we had dined. When the old man found out that we believed a person might fall from grace and be lost, he discovered a good deal of anger, and said, if David had died in the act of adultery, and Peter while swearing, they would have been saved. 'Then,' said I, 'after a man is converted he is obliged to be saved, he can't help it.' 'Yes,' says he, 'he is obliged to be saved, whether he will or not, for it is impossible for him to help it.'

He said he would as soon hear us curse God at once, as to hear us say that God would give his love to a person and then take it away. I told him God would never take it away, but we might cast it away. Seeing he was much ruffled in his temper, I thought it best to be moving; so we asked him the way to Mr. Coles', but he would not tell us, for he said Mr. Coles would not like his sending such men to his house. However, we got directions from his wife, and then set out. I shook hands with the old man, and told him I hoped God would reward him for his kindness."

He passed on to Derby, where, hiring the bell-man to ring the people out, he addressed them, and departed to preach at Milford. Thence he passed to New Haven, where he preached on Sunday. Besides the Stamford or Redding circuit, where he had labored at first, he had now formed the New Haven circuit, extending over a hundred and twenty miles, and comprising three cities, five thickly settled towns, and several smaller places. This range of travel and labor was to be compassed every fortnight by the tireless Itinerant of the times. It has since become a most prosperous field of Methodism. A writer, who labored in it during 1832, says that the present New Haven district is almost entirely composed of Lee's two-weeks circuit — it contained at that date *fifteen* circuits and stations, employed *thirty-four* travelling preachers, had between *thirty and forty* local preachers, nearly *fifty* meeting-houses, and 5,824 church members.*

He spent about two weeks more in traversing Connecticut, preaching almost daily. On Saturday, April 17, he penetrated into Windham county, Vermont, where he spent two days, and passing through a portion of New Hampshire, entered Massachusetts. He records "many discouragements," and "not so much satisfaction in Massachusetts as in Connecticut." On the 10th of May he was again in the latter State, preaching, and consoling himself with his co-laborer, George Roberts, at Middletown. The next day he was away again, travelling to and fro, in Connecticut, and proclaiming daily the word of life, until the latter part of June, when he set his face towards the East. On his route, he delivered two discourses at Norwich, and thence passed to New London, where he preached several times, with much comfort. Thence he went to Stonington, where he delivered his message, and entered Rhode Island. In the latter State he preached respectively at Newport, Bristol, Warren, and Providence. At Warren he was cordially admitted to the pulpits of other denominations, and treated with much kindness. In Providence he preached five times in a private house, and several times in the court-house.

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* Letter of Rev. Heman Bangs, in Ch. Ad. and Journal, Nov. 23, 1832.

He left Providence for Boston. When about ten miles on his way, his attention was suddenly arrested by a sight as astonishing to him, under the circumstances, as a supernatural apparition could well be. He saw, at a distance on the road, two men on horseback, habited with the simplicity of Methodist preachers, and accompanied by that invariable symbol of our early Itinerancy — the now obsolete *saddle-bags.* One of these horsemen was an intelligent but humble looking colored man, who seemed to enjoy his position more than if he were attending a hero in a triumph, the other was a man of small but robust stature, neatly clad, of benignant aspect, and presenting, to Lee's eye, a startling resemblance to one of his old companions in the Itinerant labors of the South. They appeared dusty and weary, as if they had journeyed far during the day. Lee quickened his pace, halted before them, and was soon clasping with delight the hand of his former friend and fellow laborer, *Freeborn Garrettson.* Garrettson, like himself, was a native of the Middle States,—a burning and a shining light in our early ministry,—zealous, remarkably placable, always rejoicing in God, "All meekness and love, and yet all activity," said Coke,—a man of property, who had emancipated his slaves for Christ's sake, had travelled in the South, in the Middle States, in the North, and even in the British Provinces, to preach his "Glorious Gospel," had suffered indescribable privations and fatigues as his ambassador, had been mobbed and imprisoned, had escaped attempts on his life, made with fire arms and with poison,—a man who had every domestic attraction to allure him from his work, and every susceptibility of the heart to feel such attractions, and yet who declared through a long and by a laborious career, that none of these things moved him; neither counted he his life dear unto himself so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. His colored companion was well known in the church of that day as "Black Harry;" he not only ministered to the temporal convenience of his master, but aided in his spiritual labors by frequently exhorting and preaching after him.

The meeting of the two evangelists on the highway was too remarkable not to attract attention; a spectator approached them, and perceiving their character, and affected by their spirit, invited them to partake of his hospitality and preach at his house that night. Such interviews were too rare and too refreshing in that day not to be relished by the weary Itinerants. They accepted the invitation, preached that night and the next morning in the house of their host, and tarried till after dinner in comforting conversations and devotions. Let us leave them there while we trace the Eastern excursion of Garrettson, which thus brought him upon the path of Lee.

On his return from Nova Scotia, in 1787, he passed through Boston, where he found three persons who had been members of a Methodist Society, which was formed there some seventeen years before by Mr. Boardman — one of the first two preachers sent across the Atlantic by Wesley. The Society had expired for lack of pastoral care. Mr. Garrettson preached several sermons in private houses and departed to the South, not, however, without the purpose of future efforts for Boston. After laboring some time in Maryland, he started on his way to New England in May, 1788. But on arriving at New York, he was induced by Asbury to take charge of the Northern district which extended up the Hudson and included most of the Methodist work at that time in the State of New York. He was thus prevented from anticipating Lee in the labor and honor of founding Methodism in New England. He kept a steady eye upon it, however, especially upon Boston, and in 1790, while yet superintending the Northern district, he started on an excursion to the Eastern metropolis.

He entered the North-western angle of Connecticut at Sharon, on the 20th of June, accompanied by "Harry," and preached under the trees to about one thousand people, from, "O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock," &c. "I was much drawn out," he says, "and great attention was paid to the word. The devil strives very hard to hinder the spreading of the gospel in this town; but, blessed be God, many are under awakenings, and I think the kingdom of Satan will be greatly shaken.

On the 22d, he rode about fifteen miles, and preached in a Presbyterian meeting-house to some hundreds, on, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" His hearers were deeply affected under the word.

Wednesday, 23d, he rode about twelve miles to Litchfield, and was surprised to find the doors of the Episcopal church open, and a large congregation waiting for him. He discoursed from, "Enoch walked with God," and believed good was done. He left Harry to preach another sermon, and went on to the centre of the town; the bell rang, and he preached to a few in the Presbyterian meeting-house, and lodged with a kind Churchman.

The same day "I preached," he says, "in the skirts of the town, where I was opposed by ——, who made a great disturbance. I told him the enemy had sent him to pick up the good seed; turned my back on him, and went on my way, accompanied by brothers W. and H. I found another waiting company, in another part of the town, to whom I declared, 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' In this town we have given the devil and the wicked much trouble; we have a few good friends."

On Friday, 25th, he rode through a storm of rain some fourteen miles, and declared to a large assembly, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." The power of God was manifest among the people; "several," he writes, "were in tears, and there was a shaking among them." He had now penetrated far enough into New England to meet with its peculiarities, especially that pugnacious interest for "principles," which Lee and his associates had so generally startled. The village 'squire, accompanied by a phalanx of grave townsmen, came forth to converse with him on the, to them, vital points of unconditional election and reprobation, the freedom of the will and perseverance. The discussion was held far into midnight, when the assailants, "much shaken," found it convenient to retreat. "We have hard work," he says, "to plant what they call Arminianism in this county: we stand in need of the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove."

The next morning he was away again, on his route to the Eastward, but paused to preach in a barn, from, "Deliver us from evil." "I had," he says, "a considerable degree of freedom in enforcing the necessity of being delivered from all sin; some believed it and some did not; among the rest, one good old man, who came a considerable distance on foot, said, the Lord is with us and I am satisfied. A few weeks ago he was a warm pleader for the unconditional decrees; but now he sees differently. Sunday, 27th, I preached in Farmington to about three hundred people, and had great freedom in showing that Christ tasted death for every man, and that as the way was open, if they did not repent they would justly be damned. There are a few precious souls here who cleave to our doctrine and have united to our society."

On the 28th, he reached Hartford, and preached to five or six hundred people in the court-house. They gave respectful heed to the words which were spoken by himself, but Harry, who attempted, as usual, to exhort after him, was received "very uncivilly." On the 30th, they arrived at Worcester, "where," he says, "I was kindly entertained by Mr. Chandler, but the people appeared to have a small share of religion: I went from one end of the town to the other and could get no one to open the court-house and gather the people. I went to the house of the Rev. Mr. B——, and was asked to take tea. I drew near, and inquired if it was not customary to ask a blessing? 'No,' said he, 'not over tea.' I then drew back from the table: his countenance changed, and he said in a very short manner, 'You may ask a blessing over your dish.' Pinching want might drive me to eat and drink in such a case. I had an hour's conversation with him.

It is lamentable for a master in Israel to deny the power of religion."

The next day (July 1st,) he entered Boston. The following are his notes of his visit there:

"We rode through a very pleasant country; I never saw more elegant buildings in a country place than those that surround Cambridge, and the college has an imposing appearance. I got into Boston about seven o'clock, after riding forty-eight miles. I boarded Harry with the master mason for the Africans, and I took my own lodgings with a private gentleman, who had been a Methodist in England, but has, I fear, fallen from the spirit of Methodism.

"Sunday, 4th, I attended church in the morning, and gave great uneasiness to the people with whom I lodged, on account of my not communing. I never in my life saw such a set of communicants, dressed in the height of the mode, and with all the frippery of fashion — so much of the world in their manners and appearance that my mind was most easy to look on. In the afternoon I preached in a meeting-house which had formerly belonged to Dr. Mather. Monday evening, likewise, in the same place. Tuesday I went from end to end of the town, and visited several who were friendly, a few of whom were formerly Methodists, but I fear they are not such in practice. I engaged the use of the meeting-house, and a place for a preacher to board, and on Wednesday set out for Providence." On his way thither, as we have seen, he met Lee, who himself was journeying to the metropolis of the East. Before we accompany the latter, let us follow Garrettson back to his district in New York.

On parting from Lee the next day after this unexpected meeting, he directed his course to Providence, where he had an apportunity, the same evening, of preaching in "good old Mr. Snow's meeting-house." The following day he preached there again to a larger congregation than the night before. On Sunday he officiated all day for "good Mr. Snow," beginning at 6 o'clock, A. M. Harry, also, found himself at home among the cordial people of Mr. Snow's charge, and honorable amends were made him for his discourteous reception at Hartford. He "held forth" at six o'clock, P. M., in the meeting-house, to more than a thousand people. The next morning Garrettson was up and preaching to several hundred hearers at five o'clock, and in a few hours after, was on his way westward. "I had," he says, "a sweet time in Providence. I have no doubt but the Lord begun a good work in many hearts. I left many in tears. I left town about nine o'clock, rode about thirty-five miles, and lodged at Colonel P——'s, whom I found to be a very kind man, and I trust the family were stirred up: the daughter seemed to be much affected."

Tuesday, 13th, he rode forty-five miles to Hartford, and "preached," he says, "the next evening to as ill behaved an audience as I have ever seen in New England. The people of this place, with a few exceptions, seem to be fast asleep in the arms of the wicked one." The following night he preached again, and "some of what are called the gentry," he remarks, "behaved so ill that I was under the necessity of breaking up the meeting and declining to preach by candle light."

Methodist preachers, in those times, were not to be defeated by popular violence; the next day he was preaching again in the State House. He rode to Weathersfield and preached at eleven o'clock, and likewise at two, and then returned and preached at Hartford at five, to about two hundred people. "I am apprehensive," he remarks, "from the state of religion in this place, that the ministers do not enjoy the life and power of religion; they seem to be so smoothed over that they cannot with any degree of patience bear to hear of the carnal mind, or any mention of hell. "Thursday, I preached with freedom at Farmington, and on Tuesday morning I gave an exhortation on the subject of baptism, baptized fourteen adults and children; we had a sweet time, then rode to Litchfield and preached to a serious company."

On Saturday, 24th, he preached at Cornwall. "I found," he says, "that the Lord had begun a blessed work in this town when I preached here before, so I rode to Canaan, where I was comfortable."

He had now reached the neighborhood of his district. Harry, especially, began to feel more "comfortable." On Sunday, 25th, Garrettson preached in Canaan on the talents, "The Lord was with us," he exclaims, "The work in this place is moving on. I have circulated a subscription for the building of a church here. Brother Bloodgood was with me: as it was too warm in the house I preached in the open air. Harry preached after me with much applause. I rode in the afternoon and preached in Salisbury, in a part of the town in which I had never before preached, and I think I have never seen so tender a meeting in this town before, for a general weeping ran through the assembly, especially while Harry gave an exhortation. The Lord is carrying on a blessed work in this town." By the 29th, he was on his district at Hudson, where, to gratify the public curiosity, he had to give place to Harry, who was heard by different denominations with much admiration, and whom the Quakers believed preached "by immediate inspiration."

Let us now return to Lee, and follow him in his Eastern tour. On parting from Garrettson, he pressed forward to Boston, where he arrived on the 9th of July. The impression produced by the brief visit of the former had already evanesced.

The day was spent in useless attempts to procure a place, public or private, for preaching; "every expedient failed." But not discouraged, he took his stand, as we have seen, on the Common, the next day, and delivered his message to three thousand people. As the way seemed not yet open for him, he left the city the day after his discourse on the Common, to survey yet more extensively his Eastern field.

"He rode," says his biographer, "to Salem, and preached in Mr. Joshua Spalding's pulpit, to a large company of attentive hearers. Thence he passed through Ipswich to Newburyport, and, according to direction, called on Rev. Mr. Murray. When Mr. Murray found out that he belonged to Mr. Wesley's connection, he very politely offered to treat Mr. Lee as a gentleman and as a Christian, but not as a preacher — he could not let him preach in his pulpit. His apology was, that he had been informed by letter that a preacher of the Wesleyan party had lately been up the Connecticut River, and that he had held meetings in four different places in one day. Mr. Lee informed him that he was the man who had been guilty of the crime. But, although not successful in getting Mr. Murray's pulpit, he succeeded, after much exertion, in obtaining the court-house, at which place he appointed preaching on his return. From Newburyport he proceeded to Portsmouth, then the metropolis of New Hampshire. Here he preached to a solemn and attentive congregation, and some were truly thankful that he had visited that place. He then left Portsmouth, and returned to Newburyport. Here he found, that although he had obtained leave of the selectmen to preach in the court-house, when there before, yet even in a few days, three of them had changed their minds, and were inclined to keep him out of it. However, in the evening the congregation assembled, and one of the selectmen being present, opened the door, and Mr. Lee preached to a company of well behaved people; some of whom were melted into tears before the conclusion of the sermon. Fearing lest they should form some objection to his preaching there in future, he resolved to make sure of one more time, and appointed to preach at the same place the next morning at six o'clock. Morning preaching was a new thing there, but he had a great many out, and had reason to hope that many were profited by hearing, while he was blessed in speaking.

"Leaving Newburyport, he went to the New Mills, and preached in the Baptist meeting-house. There he received a letter from Mr. Spalding, of Salem, informing him that he had made an appointment for him to preach in his meeting-house that evening. He accordingly went to Salem, and fulfilled the appointment. Here he was solicited by a gentleman from Marblehead to visit that place. He hesitated, at first, not knowing that an opportunity would be presented; but upon second thought he concluded to go and see them the next day, which he accordingly did. Here he had cause to believe that his preaching was made a great blessing to the people."

From Marblehead he rode to Boston, and preached to about three thousand people on the Common. "Blessed be God," he exclaims, "he made his quickening presence known, and met us in the field."

During the past week he had travelled at least one hundred and thirty miles, made his own appointments, and preached ten times.

In this, his second visit to Boston, he not only preached on the Common, but also in a private house; and, on one occasion, in a meeting-house belonging to the Baptists, which had been vacant. He also went to Charlestown, to see if any there were willing to receive him as the messenger of Christ.

Here he preached in a private house, and had reason to believe that many felt the weight of what was spoken. On the ensuing Sabbath he preached upon the Common, in Boston, again, to a much greater multitude than on the two former occasions. Although there had been a considerable fall of rain that day, and the earth was rendered quite wet, he calculated that there were not less than five thousand present.

Having surveyed his new sphere of labor in the East, he departed on his way to the next Conference, in New York city. He passed through Connecticut, on his route, preaching at Enfield, Hartford, Middlefields, &c. At the latter place a Quarterly Meeting was held for the New Haven circuit — the one founded by him immediately before his departure for Boston — and a society of six members was organized.

More than sixteen months had elapsed since his appointment to New England; about nine of them without the support of a single colleague. After travelling through and preaching in portions of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, proclaiming the word of life in fields, court-houses, private houses and churches, by day and by night, and surmounting obstacles from which most men would have retreated in despair, he departs to the Conference at New York, with the following reflections:

"Here I may stop and look back on the year that is past. But when I consider the many dangers I have passed through, the many mercies I have received, and the many moments I have not improved, I stand amazed at myself, and astonished at the goodness of God to me. It is now sixteen months and eight days since our last Conference, and in this time I have travelled several thousand miles, and preached in six States, and in chief part of the large towns in New England. In most places I have met with a much kinder reception than I could have expected, among persons holding principles so different from mine; yet I have been much opposed, and have been under the disagreeable necessity of spending much of my time in talking on controverted points, sometimes in public, and oft times in private. When I was opposed, if I discovered an inclination to waive the discourse, they would immediately conclude my principles were so bad that I was afraid to let them be known. For this reason I have been led to debate the matter with the principle part of those who have spoken to me with a calm spirit. I have generally quietness of mind while conversing on doctrinal points, and oft times seemed to be immediately assisted from Heaven; answers have been put in my mouth, that were not familiar to me, when strange questions have been asked. I have been enabled to go through all my hardships with great satisfaction, have been much blessed with the people, and the Lord has given me to see visible fruit of my labors, in the awakening and conversion of some precious souls."

# CHAPTER VI.

## LEE AND HIS CO-LABORERS.

## 1790–91.

Lee returns to the Conference — His Success in the East — Plan of Labor for the ensuing year — View of the Old Circuits — Dr. Roberts — John Bloodgood — John Lee — Nathaniel B. Mills — Samuel Wigton — Henry Christie — Lee's return to New England —Boston — Trials — Departs for New York — Formation of the first Methodist Society in Massachusetts — Erection of the first Chapel — Lee returns to the Conference at New York — Results.

On Monday, Oct. 4, 1790, Jesse Lee entered the Conference in New York city, to entreat additional laborers for New England. What could he report of his success since he left the same body, in June of the preceding year? A tale of as hard fare and as hard labors, doubtless, as any one there could relate, except possibly the venerable man who sat in the chair — the unequalled Asbury. But not of toils and trials alone could he speak; much had been achieved. Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Eastern Massachusetts had been quite thoroughly surveyed, for more definite plans of labor. He himself had proclaimed the principles of Methodism in all the five New England States.* He had removed much prejudice, and put the whole country more or less in expectation of further efforts. Prior to his departure from Connecticut to Boston, he had formed definitively two circuits, Stamford, Fairfield, or Redding, as it was afterwards called, and New Haven, and subsequently the general outlines of another, in Eastern Massachusetts. His fellow laborers had also extended their travels in many directions, so that five circuits were recorded on the Minutes, at the present Conference.* Many souls had been awakened and converted. Unless we err in our estimate of the returns in the Minutes, nearly 200 had been united in classes; † a remarkably large number, if we consider the formidable obstacles which obstructed every movement of the few laborers in the field. Two chapels, at least, had been erected; one — the first Methodist one ever built in New England — in the parish of Stratfield, town of Stratford, Connecticut, built by the society of Weston, (now Easton,) called *Lee's Chapel;* ‡ the second, in Dantown, partially built, as we have seen, when Lee welcomed into it his newly arrived assistants, on the 27th February, 1790.

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* Maine was not then a State, but a province of Massachusetts.

Such were the results, thus far; and with these for his arguments, Mr. Lee could not fail to intercede successfully for New England. He spent three hours in a private interview with Bishop Asbury, discussing its claims. § That good and far-seeing man of God not only complied with his wishes, so far as to despatch with him additional laborers, but resolved to visit the Eastern States himself in the course of the ensuing year.

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* Min., 1790. † Ibid.

‡ Letter of Rev. H. Huested of Stratford, Connecticut, to the Writer. Dr. Bangs (History of Methodism, vol. I, book 3, chap. 2.) places this chapel in Weston, (now Easton.) The error arose probably from the fact that the society which built it have since removed to a new edifice in that town.

§ Memoir, Chap. 11.

In the following schedule of the appointments made at this Conference for New England, we have an outline of the field of Methodism within its limits: — Jesse Lee, *Elder; Fairfield,* John Bloodgood; *New Haven,* John Lee; *Hartford,* Nathaniel B. Mills; *Boston,* Jesse Lee, Daniel Smith. Besides these circuits, under the nominal supervision of Mr. Lee, (for such only we shall find it to have been,) there was the *Litchfield* circuit, Conn.,* travelled by Samuel Wigton and Henry Christie, and included in a district which lay mostly within the State of New York, under the Presiding Eldership of the devoted Freeborn Garrettson. *One* district and part of a second, *five* circuits, and *seven* preachers, constituted, then, the ministerial arrangements of Methodism for New England, during the ecclesiastical year 1790–1.

The Litchfield circuit had been formed about the beginning of the spring of 1790, and comprehended the north-western section of Connecticut; the Hartford circuit, in the latter part of the same season, and "took in both sides of the Connecticut." † It included Wilbraham, Mass., Tolland, Hartford, Windsor, Suffield, Granby, Enfield, Winterbury, Middletown, &c. Fairfield, we suppose, designates what was, at first, named the Stamford circuit. We have already described it, as also that of New Haven, which "extended along the post road from Milford to Hartford." ‡

The name of George Roberts does not appear on the roll of this pioneer band, but is put down, as we have already noticed, for Annamessex, Md., though he had arrived in New England more than seven months before the session of the Conference in New York which terminated the ecclesiastical year, and therefore preceded the publication of the Minutes.* He continued, however, in the East, and his name appears in the list of New England appointments for the next year.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Ann. 1790.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

The reader cannot regret more than ourselves the meagreness of our sketches of these early evangelists. The records of those days are too scanty to admit of any thing like biographical detail. Such as we have, however, we give, and claim only the credit of having searched laboriously, though in vain, for ampler information. If the obvious deficiency of these data should lead to any attempts to supply it from the personal reminiscences which may yet be extant, we shall claim the further credit of an important service to the church.

John Bloodgood, whose name is recorded for Fairfield this year, was received into the Conference on probation, in 1788, but we have failed to ascertain in the Minutes his appointment for that year. In 1789 he travelled Columbia circuit, N. Y., whence he passed to Fairfield, Conn., in 1790. The next year he was appointed to Lynn, Mass., as colleague of Daniel Smith. In 1792 his name appears in the Minutes, among the Elders, but we have found no intimation whatever of his appointment. In 1793 he travelled the Annapolis circuit, Md. Except the year 1808, when he accompanied Dr. Thomas Lyell to the East, and was appointed with him to Boston and Lynn, he continued in the Middle States, occupying important circuits and stations — among them Baltimore city several times — until 1809, when he is returned as located in the Baltimore Conference. His labors at Annapolis, and on Harford circuit, were attended by signal revivals. While at the latter, he received into the church the present senior editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal, who writes us the following notice of him:

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* There are confusions in the earlier Minutes, which utterly baffle our powers of discrimination.

"I was taken into the church during his term of service on Harford circuit, Baltimore Conference, in the month of September, 1800; and in the course of the winter, and during my probation, appointed by him to the charge of a colored class, at the Fork meeting-house, within three miles of my father's residence, though in Baltimore County. Mr. B.'s colleague, or assistant preacher, at that time, was Nicholas Waters, a brother of William Waters, the first American preacher who entered the travelling connection.

"The sudden death of my medical preceptor, Dr. Day, occasioned my removal to Baltimore, before Mr. B. left our circuit; and I lost sight of him until his location. He married in Baltimore, and died there, leaving a daughter, who is still living. I have no information with respect to the life and conversation, or the death, of this eminently useful minister of Christ. I think his health must have failed so entirely as to prevent him from pulpit labors, as I have no recollection of hearing him preach after his location, though he resided partly in Fells-point and partly at his country seat in the suburbs of the city.

"Of the personal and ministerial character of Mr. Bloodgood, I cannot be supposed to have been very competent to form an adequate judgment, so early in life and in religious profession. In personal appearance, he was imposing — tall, well-formed, straight as an arrow, with a fine complexion, good symmetrical features, and especially a quick and penetrating eye; he appeared to great advantage in the pulpit. I think he wore a wig, which took off something from the appearance which his real age would have given; and in his dress he was remarkably particular; not at all foppish, but always neat, to the tie of his neckerchief, and his clothes brush was held in daily requisition. His mental endowments were good, but his acquirements did not correspond with his capacity. His education was restricted to the rudiments commonly taught in country schools in his time. My father's house was a preaching place, and Mr. Bloodgood had a regular appointment there every other Sabbath, in the afternoon. Monday was a resting day, and was spent at my father's. On Tuesday there was preaching at Mr. George Garrettson's, brother of the venerable Freeborn Garrettson. Mr. Bloodgood evidently took some pains to prepare for the pulpit; but after searching his Bible — and he read it much — he seemed to depend on his own invention for the laying out and filling up of his discourse. Earnest, with an evident exhibition of a deep self-conviction of the truths he delivered, and a feeling of the importance of the exhortations he gave, confining himself to the common topics — the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the danger of delaying conversion, and the freeness and fullness of the salvation offered in the Gospel, and taking his illustrations, and borrowing his imagery, from the objects most familiar to his hearers — he found direct access to the consciences and the hearts of his hearers, and turned many to righteousness. The revival of 1800, perhaps, exceeded any thing which had ever been known in the church, both in the rapidity of its spread, and the number and variety of its subjects. The whole church partook of it; and in some places it promised a universal turning of the people from Satan unto God. Every where you went, even in the depth of winter, the woods were vocal with the songs of Zion; the children, as they went to school, people on the road, or in the forest felling the timber, or procuring fuel, all, and always, were singing the hymns and spiritual songs which were sung at Methodist meetings; and every prayer-meeting appointed, whether the preachers were present or absent, was crowded with people rejoicing in hope, or inquiring for the way of life. Under such circumstances, such a man as John Bloodgood could but be in his element. Rest days were unknown. Every day, and every night, was employed in his work, the work of 'saving souls.' And great was the success his Master gave him; numerous will be the stars in his crown gathered from Harford circuit. He died in 1810."

JOHN LEE, who was appointed this year to the New Haven circuit, entered the Itinerant ministry in 1788, and was appointed, with his brother Jesse, to Flanders circuit, N. J. The year following, he was colleague with Wm. Phœbus, on the Long Island circuit. His appearance on the new field of the East was brief, but signal. Though attended by the disabilities of incurable disease, he had a soul of fire, and his shattered frame was indeed "the temple of the Holy Ghost;" a dilapidated shrine, in which the divine Shekinah dwelt and shone. His brother has published a memoir of his brief and suffering life, which exhibits him as a man of extraordinary consecration, incessant in prayer, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting for the salvation of souls, rising often in the midst of wintry nights, while all others around were wrapped in sleep, and struggling, like Jacob, in supplications for himself, the church, and the world. With the tenderest sensibility, chastened by much physical suffering, a burning zeal that would have welcomed martyrdom, and persuasive and affecting powers of address, he appeared in the pulpit anointed with a divine unction which seemed to drip down his whole person, "like the precious ointment that ran down the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." Many were blessed and comforted by his short ministry in the East. One circumstance, if no other, rendered his visit memorable in our history. He was instrumental in the conversion of the first native Methodist preacher raised up in New England. That venerable man, still lingering among us, speaks of him in the following terms:

"John Lee, the brother of Jesse Lee, came to Lynn, to visit his brother Jesse, on or near the 1st of September, 1791. His coming proved a blessing to many. He was a lively, animated preacher, had a strong, clear, musical voice, and was affectionate in his address. As he had drunk deep of the cup of bitterness, of wormwood and gall, for his own sins, he had a sympathizing heart for those who were in distress. He was the instrument, in God's hand, of ministering the balm of comfort to my sin-sick soul. He was emphatically a son of consolation. His short visit to Lynn and vicinity was profitable to many. His last address was from Ephes. 5: 1: 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.' He had a pleasant and profitable gift of exhortation, which he often improved after his brother Jesse and others had preached. He had the happy faculty of bringing religious truth home to the minds and hearts of his hearers, in an easy, familiar way, and of carrying their feelings with him into the pleasant paths of practical piety. He was of a consumptive habit, frequently spitting blood, which was increased by often speaking in public. He was obliged to retire from constant, laborious service, and lived a few years, lingering out a happy life, in endeavoring, in vain, to recover health, to be more active in the ministry. His death was singularly peaceful. His brother Jesse has published a short account of his experience, life and death. He located, through ill health, in 1791." *

His death was sudden, but worthy of him. He had been travelling in the Southern States, accompanied by a servant,

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* Letter of Rev. E. Mudge to the Writer.

in persuit of health. On his way home, without improvement, he observed to his attandant that he felt a difficulty in breathing and believed he was near his end. His servant attempted to persuade him that his danger was not so imminent; he replied, that "it was no trifling matter, for an ulcer was formed on his lungs; that he expected it would break on the outside of the lungs, and if it did, he should die in a few hours." * In a short time he declared that the ulcer was broken, and in the manner he expected. They hastened to a house and requested admission, which was granted. After entering the house, he went out to the servant, who was taking care of the horses, and assuring him that he should die in a few hours, gave him his papers and directions respecting his burial. He re-entered the house and inquired if any of the family could sing. His hostess replied they could, but imperfectly. He asked if any of them prayed openly, but received no reply. He then said, "I must pray," and falling on his knees, lifted up his failing voice in supplication to God. He prayed again and again and continued on his knees as if he wished to die in that humble posture; but his attendant took him up and laid him on a bed. He then sent a message to his friends, entreating them not to sorrow for his fate, and assuring them that he departed with certain hope of eternal life. He died without a groan, in a few hours after the attack, in Surry County, North Carolina, on the 6th of October, 1801.

NATHANIEL B. MILLS, was a hero in our early ministry. He was born in Newcastle county, State of Delaware, on the 23d of February, 1766. Up to the fifteenth year of his age he indulged, as he himself admits, in the usual follies and vices of youth; not, however, without serious and frequent reproaches of conscience. At this early age, when just

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* Lee's Memoir, page 285.

emerging from childhood, he was brought, chiefly through the instrumentality of Methodism, to the discovery of his lost condition as a sinner, and his need of salvation through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was not "disobedient unto the heavenly vision," but promptly, and with full purpose of heart, began to seek, through faith, an interest in the atonement of Christ. Or, to use his own language, he "became an habitually serious seeker of salvation." It was not, however, until two years subsequent to this remarkable event in his early history, that in the seventeenth year of his age, he found what he had thus so long and assiduously sought, "redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins." "Not long after," as he informs us, "by a singular circumstance," which, however, he does not name, "I was convinced of inbred sin," and induced to seek entire sanctification through the blood of Christ; "Which," he adds, "I trust I found, in some degree, at least, about the twentieth year of my age." "Soon after my conversion," he continues, "I felt desires to warn my fellow men to flee the wrath to come; which I did first in my own neighborhood, and then at a distance, as Providence opened the way." After much prayer for divine direction, and careful self-examination, that he might not be deceived in a matter of so much importance to himself and others, he offered himself, and was received on probation in the Baltimore Conference, in the Spring of 1787.*

Before his arrival in New England, he had travelled on Trenton, Salem and Newburg circuits, in New Jersey. In 1790 he was appointed to Hartford, Conn., in 1791 to Fairfield, Conn., and in 1792 to Dorchester, Md. During the following five years, he labored extensively in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and other middle States. In 1797 and 8, we find his appointment bearing the significant designation, "*Ohio;*" it doubtless verged on, if it did not penetrate, the wilderness which since, under the same name, has become the noblest State of the West. The following year he was again in Virginia, on Prince George's circuit; in 1800, he was colleague of the veteran James Quinn, at Pittsburg, under the Presiding Eldership of Daniel Hitt—an illustrious companionship. During twenty-four years, we find him pursuing his ministerial career in the Baltimore Conference, moving to and fro, from its eastern circuits to Ohio, and from the interior of Pennsylvania to that of Virginia, until 1824, when he appears in the list of the "superannuated and worn-out preachers" of that Conference, in company with Nelson Reed, Joshua Wells, and other distinguished veterans. But it is hard for a hero to retire from the field, while the clarion is still sounding, or the shout of battle is on the air; and even the old war-horse "saith among the trumpets, aha! aha! and smells the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." Though he had passed nearly forty years in the ministry, we find the hoary headed Mills, at the next Conference, leaving the ranks of the Superannuated, and entering again the effective lists, where he continued till 1829, when, after a laborious ministry of forty-two years, he took his place among the Supernumeraries of the Conference. He continued, however, to preach regularly, being appointed that year to Rockingham; in 1830, to Great Falls; 1831, Loudon and Fairfax; 1832, Baltimore circuit; 1833, Liberty; and in 1834, Frederick. In 1835 he was compelled to retire again to the ranks of the Superannuated, where he continued till his death. The ministry of the Word was, however, "a ruling passion" with him, and it was strong even till death. He continued to labor, with untiring constancy, as he had strength and opportunity; and the last public act of his protracted ministry was performed on the last Sabbath of his life. On the morning of that day he preached his last sermon. The selection of his final text was characteristic of the veteran soldier of Christ, it was from Judges 5: 31: "So let all thine enemies be scattered, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

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* Minutes of 1844–5.

On the following Thursday morning, the day on which he closed together his labors and his sufferings, he led the devotions of the family: so that, in his case, the pious wish of the venerable Wesley seemed to be fully realized:—

"O, that without a ling'ring groan
  I may the welcome word receive:
My body with my charge lay down;
  And cease at once to work and live."

Without a "struggle or a groan" he made his triumphant exit to the paradise and presence of God, and literally ceased at once to "work and live." "He was a holy man of God," says the account to which we are indebted for most of these facts,* "and though we are not permitted to claim for him entire exemption from the ordinary infirmities and weaknesses inseparable from humanity, we are at least warranted in saying that these infirmities are seldom found associated with greater purity of purpose and innocency of life. He was also a sound, good, and practical preacher, of the primitive school of Methodist ministers. He was, indeed, one of the last of that highly interesting class of men, to whom, under God, the church and the world are so deeply indebted. His death may, to some extent, be regarded as the severance of the last link — so far, at least, as the ministry of this Conference is concerned — by which the past and the present have heretofore been united. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man in peace.'"

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* Obituary from the Baltimore Conference, in the Minutes of 1844–5.

Samuel Wigton joined the Itinerancy in 1788, and was appointed to take Lake Champlain circuit, (N. Y.;) the next year he travelled on Columbia circuit, (N. Y.,) with John Bloodgood; he labored in New England only during 1790; the following year he was at Albany; in 1792, on Columbia circuit, (N. Y.,) and in 1793 at Albany again; this was the last year of his Itinerant labors; the next he is reported in the list of locations, and disappears from our view.

Henry Christie, his colleague, was admitted on trial, as a travelling preacher, in the year of his appointment to Litchfield circuit. He afterwards travelled Columbia circuit, (N. Y.) His marriage, as usual in those days of the poverty of the church, led to his location. He resided more than twenty years in Cornwall, Litchfield county, Connecticut, where he continued to assist his Itinerant brethren as a faithful local preacher. He shared, also, their trials. He was summoned early one morning, before he was out of his bed, with a writ, by a sheriff, for marrying a couple, and was saved from a lodgment in jail only by the timely bail of a Christian brother. In 1817 he removed to Ohio, where he continued to preach with increased frequency. The exposure to which he was subjected in his preaching excursion, at last destroyed his health, and in 1826 he sunk into the repose of the grave, joyful in the hope of the first resurrection. On his dying bed, being asked how he was, he replied, "I am near my Father's house." To his neighbors and friends, who often visited him, he spoke of the holy raptures of his soul, and of his cloudless prospect of the eternal inheritance which awaited him. He admonished his family to be faithful to God, and requested them to inform the absent members, "*that he* *died in the faith.*" His last hours were relieved by special consolations and triumph; when assured by his physician that his agonies (which were very severe) would soon end, he smiled, and exclaimed, "*Glory to God! I have a desire to depart and be with Christ.*" When his final hour arrived, he extended his almost lifeless hand to the bystanders, evidently for the purpose of having his family come near to him; but he was unable to speak; his countenance, shining with joy, expressed his emotions. He endeavored to close his own eyes, but failing to do so, clapped his hands in token of victory and triumph, and his soul fled to the bosom of God.*

We turn our glance from these subordinate labors, not without a pensive sense of its unavoidable inadequacy, to the great champion of the arena. Lee was preparing, at the New York Conference, to return to his New England labors and struggles, but before he left, melancholy news arrived, informing him of the death of his sainted mother, whom he had not seen for two years and a half; he wept, was "confused in mind, scarcely knowing whether to return to New England or go home;" but his missionary zeal prevailed; he sent his brother to the afflicted family, "went with him to the ferry, stood and looked after him for a while, returned with a sorrowful heart," and, in less than a week, was sounding the evangelical trumpet again in the unfinished chapel, and receiving consolation in his sorrow, from the little band of disciples at Dantown, Conn. He also visited Stamford, Middlesex, Wilton, Redding, Newtown, Stratford, Putney, Milford, Wallingford, Middlefield, Middletown, South Farms, Weathersfield and Hartford, at the last of which places he formed a society. From Hartford he set out for Boston, and arrived there the 13th of November. The next day was Sunday, but there was no place in which he could preach during the day. At night he addressed a small company in a private house.

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* Meth. Mag., vol. ix., 1826.

His reception in the Puritan city, at this time, was, if possible, even more discouraging than at his previous visit. The description of it is chilling.

"The following part of the week," says he, "I met with great and heavy trials. I took much pains in trying to get a house to preach in; but all in vain. A few of the friendly people made a little move also, but did not succeed. One of the greatest friends I had in the town when I was here before, did not come to see me now; and when I went to see him, would scarcely take any notice of me. I met with difficulties and troubles daily, yet I put my trust in God, and in general, was confirmed in the opinion that God would bless my coming to Boston. I spent one evening with Mr. John Carnes, merchant, who treated me with great politeness, and said he would assist me in any thing he could. The greater part of the week was wet, so that I could go out but little. My cry was, 'Lord, help me.'"

More than a week had thus passed, without affording a suitable house for preaching; and the Common, his resort at his former visit, was too exposed to the inclemency of the season to admit of an assembly under its trees. On Monday, the 22d, he "tried every prudent means" to obtain a house, but in vain; he was discouraged, but comforts himself with a characteristic reflection: — "Perhaps the Lord sees it best for me to be tried in this manner, *though it is painful for me to be so idle.*" A second week passed without success, but a gleam of hope came from another quarter.

"We had a letter," he says, "from a gentleman in Lynn, who desired me to come and see him, and gave me some encouragement; for he said he had a desire to hear some of the Methodists preach. I then began to think that the Lord was about opening a way for me to preach there. I made some inquiry about a place in Boston, and told some of my best friends, that if they could not get one, I would go myself, and try and do the best that I could. I began to think the Lord would grant me my request, and provide me a place to preach in."

He could not leave Boston without further efforts. "A man went with me to the high sheriff, and we asked for liberty to preach in the court-house. He said he could not give leave himself, but that the clerk of the court had the disposing of the house, and we must apply to him. So we went to the clerk, and told him what we wanted, but he very abruptly refused. After hearing him talk awhile, we left him, and I felt more discouraged than ever; yet if I am right, the Lord will provide for me.

"Thursday, 2d of December. At night one of my friends came home with me, and told me he had used every means he could to get a particular school-house for me to preach in, but had at last received a plain denial, and it was given up. This, with all the other denials, bore pretty heavy upon my mind, and I began to doubt again whether I ought to be in this place or not."

More than four weeks had passed in these useless endeavors to obtain a place for preaching; it was time to look elsewhere. "On Monday," he writes, "I left Boston, and went in the stage to Benjamin Johnson's, in Lynn, about twelve miles. I got there little after dark, and was very gladly received by him and his family. I felt as though I was at home, as soon as I arrived. I had not been there long, before he expressed a desire of having a Methodist society set up in the town, though he had not heard a Methodist preach for nearly twenty years. In this place I found several persons that had heard some of our preachers in the South, in past years. Some of the people consider it as a very favorable Providence, that I have come to Lynn at this time, and they bid me welcome with a cheerful heart."

The next day the news of his arrival was spread through the village, and in the evening he preached, at Mr. Johnson's house, the first sermon ever delivered by a Methodist preacher in Lynn. His text was: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be saved." "I had," he says, "a good many hearers, and great freedom in preaching. I bore a public testimony against unconditional election and reprobation, and maintained that Christ died for all men, without respect to persons. I felt much of the power and love of God, and earnestly begged the people to turn from their sins, and come to Christ. The hearers were very attentive, and a few of them seemed to be somewhat affected." "Bless the Lord, O my soul," he adds, "for bringing me among this people."

"Monday, 20. I spent the day at Mr. Johnson's, and in the evening rode to Mr. Lye's, at Wood-End, about one mile; and at dark I preached on Gal. 6: 7. The house was well filled with people; a considerable number of aged persons were present, and several of the Quakers were there. I felt a great enlargement of heart, and much of the divine presence, whilst I was warning the people not to be deceived. The presence of God was in the assembly; some of the hearers appeared to be greatly lifted up with love and thankfulness. O, that God may continue these serious impressions on their minds, till they are brought to the knowledge of God. I have not met with a company of people for a long time that had so much the appearance of a Methodist congregation as this."

His friends at Lynn wished to form a Methodist society immediately, but leaving with them copies of the General Rules, and directing them to reflect longer on their propositions, he returned again to Boston, determined not to abandon it without a further struggle. Pecuniary embarrassments were added to his other vexations, but he was not to be discouraged. "When I arrived in Boston," he remarks, "every thing appeared as dark as when I left it, respecting my preaching. I had to get a new boarding place. When I settled my past boarding, I had two shillings and a penny left, which was all that I had. Some days before, I felt concerned about my purse, not knowing that there was enough in it to discharge the debt due for my board. I was unwilling to let the people know that my money was just gone, for fear they should think it was money only that I was after. But I soon felt confidence in God, that he would provide for me, though I knew not how. However, a man in Lynn offered to buy a Magazine that I had for my own use. I very willingly parted with it, and by that means was enabled to discharge the debt. And if I can always have two shillings by me, beside paying all I owe, I think I shall be satisfied."

Such discouragements would have been insupportable to any ordinary man, but, though among strangers, repulsed on every hand, reduced to but two shillings, he could not be driven from the city. "He lingered," says his biographer, "until he bore his testimony for Jesus. His preaching was not in vain in the Lord. Some were touched under the Word, and brought to feel the force of divine truth. And let the Methodists of Boston, who now enjoy such distinguished privileges, recollect that they are indebted, under the blessing of God, to the indefatigable perseverance of Jesse Lee, amidst neglect and insults, for their first establishment."

The remainder of this year, and the year following, until the latter part of the month of May, his labors were principally in the following places, viz., Boston, Lynn, Marblehead, Danvers, Manchester, Beverly, Cape Ann Harbor, Ipswich and Salem.

On the 20th February, 1791, he formed the first Methodist society of Massachusetts, in Lynn. It consisted of eight persons.* On the 27th of the same month, it amounted to twenty-nine members, and in the ensuing month of May more than seventy persons took certificates of their attendance on his ministry — a measure rendered necessary by the laws of that day, in order to secure them from taxation for the support of the clergy of the "standing order." On the 14th of June, they began the erection of the first Methodist church in Massachusetts. It was raised on the 21st of the same month, and dedicated on the 26th. They entered it for public worship in less than two weeks from the day on which its foundation was laid. It may well be supposed that it was not finished with much fastidiousness. It was, in fact, but the shell of a frame building.

Lynn now became his head quarters, until his departure to the next Conference at New York. His excursions from it were, however, incessant, and in all directions. He kept a steady eye on Boston. "On Monday, 18th of April," he says, "I rode to Boston, and at night, in a private house at the North End, I preached on 1 Cor., 15:33. I had more hearers than I commonly have at this place, and they were very attentive. I believe the Word reached some of their hearts.

"Tuesday, 19th. I tarried in town, and at night, at the same place, I preached on Gal. 3: 9: 'The just shall live by faith.' We had much of the divine presence among us. I felt much inward peace, and increase of faith. The people were more affected than they have generally been in this house ; they expressed a greater regard for me, and appeared to be more friendly than usual. I am still led to hope that the Lord will open the hearts of these people to attend the word spoken by the Methodists ; but let the Lord work by whom he will."

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* Lee's History of Methodism.

The hope was not an illusion ; but the time was not yet.

On Monday, the 9th of May, he took his leave of Lynn for the New York Conference. "I met," he says, "the men's class in Lynn, in the morning, and they seemed lively and very humble. We had a sorrowful parting. It is not quite five months since I first preached in this place, and there are now in society fifty-eight members. About 10 o'clock, the men who generally attend on my preaching, came to me and obtained certificates, to show that they attended public worship with the Methodists, and contributed to the support of their ministry. After dinner I prayed with those that were present, and then bid them all farewell, and set out for Conference at New York."

About seven months had passed since the preceding Conference.* Mr. Lee had made a strong impression in the region of Boston, Lynn, Salem, Ipswich, Newburyport, &c. Only a single society, however, had been formed — the one at Lynn. An extensive circuit had, nevertheless, been invested with posts of regular labor, and Boston itself, though no society was formed there till the next year, had given a humble place to the indomitable evangelist — one which, however dubious its prospects might have appeared, could never again be wrested from a man of his vigor. He went to the Conference, then, reporting one circuit, one chapel, one society, and 58 members. His colleagues, in the west of New England, had been cheered by visible success. Six circuits were reported, bearing New England names.* The returns of members in society, on these circuits, exhibited an aggregate of 481,† a gain of 300 on the returns made eight months before. The good seed so widely sown and laboriously cultivated, had taken root, and was already bearing fruit. The experiment of Methodism in New England was determined. Thenceforth was the new denomination to take rank among the Christian bodies of the Puritan States; spreading, as we have since seen it, the principles of a milder theology and a livelier piety through their length and breadth.

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* Conferences, at that early period, were not limited to annual sessions.

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* Kingston, which is included in Mr. Lee's district, in the Minutes this year, and would appears therefore, a seventh, was in Upper Canada.

† One, at least, of these circuits, reached into New York. Our ecclesiastical geography then, as now, disclaimed all regard to the civil divisions of the land, and is, therefore, involved in confusion.

# CHAPTER VII.

## LEE'S CO-LABORERS IN NEW ENGLAND, IN 1791–2.

Plan of Labors — Matthias Swaim — James Covel — Aaron Hunt — Religious Condition of New England — John Allen – Lemuel Smith — Menzies Rainor — Robert Green — Locations.

We have traced Lee and his fellow laborers down to the end of the ecclesiastical year, 1790–1.

On the 26th of May,* 1791, the Conference assembled in New York city. The minutes report the following plan of appointments in New England, for the year. Jesse Lee, *Elder; Litchfield*, Matthias Swaim, James Covel; *Fairfield*, Nathaniel B. Mills, Aaron Hunt; *Middlefields*, John Allen, George Roberts; *Hartford*, Lemuel Smith, Menzies Rainor; *Stockbridge*, Robert Green; *Lynn*, John Bloodgood, Daniel Smith. *One* district — *six* circuits — four in Connecticut, and two in Massachusetts — with *eleven* circuit preachers and *one* Presiding Elder, constituted the ministerial corps and field of Methodism in New England, for the year 1791.

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* Not the 26th of June, as the Mem. of Lee states.

Stockbridge is the name of a new circuit in Massachusetts, reported this year for the first time. Middlefields,* Conn. appears, also, for the first time — a new name, probably, for one of the circuits reported the preceding year. Boston circuit of the last year, changes its name to Lynn in the present Minutes.

As we re-cast our eye over this list of the pioneer laborers of Methodism in the East, we cannot repress the repeated expression of our regret that from the deficiency of the contemporary records of the church, names which should be so precious in its memory must remain in its annals, like those fixed stars of our firmament, the remoteness of which occasions alike our ignorance of their conditions, and their steadfastness of position and brilliancy.

We have already given what slight information we could glean respecting a few of them. The extent of our knowledge of the remainder is still more limited. Of MATTHIAS SWAIM we can ascertain nothing, except the designation of his places of labor, in the Minutes. He entered the Itinerant ministry in 1790, and was appointed to the New Rochelle (N. Y.) circuit, with William Phœbus and Jacob Brush. The next year he labored in New England, on the Litchfield (Conn.) circuit. He was removed, the ensuing year, to Saratoga circuit, (N. Y.,) where he continued two years, after which we find him on Columbia circuit, (N. Y.) In 1795, he travelled Newburg circuit, (N. J.;) in 1796, he is returned as located, and appears no more in the roll of the "noble army" of Itinerant evangelists who were extending Methodism through the land.

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* We do not find the name of this circuit in either Lee's or Bangs' History for the year 1791; but it is in the Minutes, both among the appointments and in the census of numbers. In the latter, 62 are assigned to it, a larger number than on Lynn, Stockbridge, or Hartford circuits. We suppose, therefore, that it is a previous circuit newly named. The name of New Haven disappears this year.

James Covel, his colleague on Litchfield circuit, entered the travelling ministry the present year. After laboring one year on Litchfield circuit, he was removed to Otsego, (N. Y.) In 1793 he was again in New England, travelling the Pittsfield circuit, with the devoted Zadok Priest. The following year he was re-appointed to Litchfield. In 1795 he was sent eastward to Marblehead, where he married. In those days, when little or no provision was made by the church for the support of the families of preachers, to marry was virtually to locate; hence we find Mr. Covel but one year longer in the Itinerant ranks. He labored in 1796 at Lynn, and then disappears from the Minutes. "Those were times," says one who witnessed them, "to try men's souls." Many of the preachers were useful, and carried their good influence to their graves; others located, through necessity. An unreasonable prejudice prevailed among our people against the marriage of preachers, and no provisions were made for families.*

Aaron Hunt was born in Eastchester, Westchester county, New York, March 28, 1768. Living between the lines of the two contending parties in the Revolutionary war, he was brought into contact with crime of almost every kind, yet such was the fear of God in his young mind, that he was mercifully preserved from the prevailing evils of the times. When near seventeen years of age, he went to New York city, and was employed as clerk in a store by a distant relative. "There I prided myself," he says, "in just dealing and good morals, and generally attended divine worship in the Protestant Episcopal Church, where the doctrine taught confirmed me in the belief that all religion consisted in *morals* and *ordinances*."* When about nineteen years of age, he attended a meeting in the old John Street Church, and heard, for the first time, a Methodist preacher. "He so explained and enforced the word of God," remarks Mr. Hunt, "as to convince me that I had no religion." He sought it earnestly, and when about twenty-one years of age, after deep convictions and anxiety, he found redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. He now felt an ardent desire for the salvation of others, and began to speak and pray in social meetings. But to give up flattering prospects in business, and enter the Itinerant ministry, required a sore conflict. "However," he adds, "I felt *woe* is me if I preach not the gospel, and I plainly saw that the Itinerant plan was the more excellent way of doing good." In the winter of 1790–1, "encouraged by that dear man of God, Jacob Brush, Presiding Elder of the New York district," he went on to Long Island circuit, with William Phœbus. "This circuit extended from Brooklyn, (where we had a small class, and preached in a private house,) over a very considerable part of the island." In May, 1791, he was admitted on trial in the New York Conference, and appointed to Fairfield circuit, Conn., in company with Rev. N. B. Mills, "a man small in stature, intelligent, sound, an able preacher, and rather inclined to dejection." Fairfield circuit included the whole of the county of that name, and some places in its vicinity. In 1792, he was appointed to Middletown circuit. It included Middlesex, and a great part of New Haven counties. This year his Presiding Elder directed him to cross the Connecticut River, to "break up new ground." From East Hartford he passed to Enfield, Springfield, Wilbraham, &c., and thence into

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* Letter of Rev. E. Mudge to the Writer.

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* Letter to the Writer.

Windham county, preaching in Pomfret, Mansfield, and several of the adjacent towns, "generally," he remarks, "to good congregations; though at one appointment, where I had been directed by Jesse Lee, I had no congregation, nor would the gentleman on whom I called suffer me to stay in his house. I had to ride several miles in the darkness of the night to a public house. A kind Providence witnessed my prayers and tears, and overruled this for good. The innkeeper invited me to stay and preach in his ball room the next day. I did so; the congregation was so large that we adjourned to the meeting-house, and I preached to them with great liberty. In this tour I preached in many places not before visited by any Methodist preacher. We did not wait to be invited, in those days, but sowed the seed of the kingdom wherever we could. As by our excellent economy my brethren soon succeeded me, good societies were formed in many places." At the Tolland Conference, Aug. 12, 1793, Bishop Asbury gave him Deacon's orders, and appointed him again to Fairfield circuit. There he found several of his spiritual children, and met with a cordial reception. In September, 1794, Conference met again, but being unwell, he did not attend. He sent on a request by a brother for a location. By some inadvertance, his name was wholly omitted in the Minutes, so that he did not receive his certificate of location till the next Conference, when his name appears on the Minutes as located. Meanwhile he continued to labor as he had strength, preaching on the Sabbath, and frequently on week days. His health improved so that on the 18th of January, 1800, he resumed the duties of an Itinerant preacher. In June following, he received Elder's orders, at the Conference in New York, and was appointed to Litchfield circuit, then about two hundred miles in circumference. About this period he located his family on a small farm on

Redding, Connecticut, and gave himself fully to the work of the ministry, though with great sacrifice of domestic comfort. At that time the laws of the State exempted all property belonging to ministers of the gospel from State and town taxes; some of the parish pastors held large farms, and though occupied by their sons, &c., were empted. Demands, however, were made on Mr. Hunt, as on other citizens. He remonstrated, claiming the privilege of a clergyman, but promptly paid his tax the first year. The following year the bill was presented, with an understanding that if payment was refused, a four-fold tax would be collected, according to law. The town authorities admitted that he was a minister of the gospel, but thought him not included in the provisions of the act, because not settled over a parish. Considering this application of the law unequal and unjust, he presented a petition to the State legislature for himself and his brethren in the ministry. When the petition was read before the house, many of the members spurned it, and it was laid on the table; but as more liberal principles had begun to prevail in the State, and he had itinerated as a minister of the gospel through a great part of it, the members consulted on the subject *out of doors*, and knowing that the rejection of the petition would be unpopular in the community, they modified it by striking out what related to his brethren, and *restricted* the privilege to himself only,—thus it passed without any opposition, a remarkable concession to the popularity of a single individual. This placed him on an equality with *settled* ministers, and gave him a *legal* right to perform the marriage ceremony, which was denied his brethren of equal standing in the church, as in the case of Rev. George Roberts, who had been prosecuted and fined in Middletown, for assuming it. At the Conference of 1801, he received a dispensation from regular work, for domestic considerations; hence, his name was retained on the Minutes without an appointment; still he labored extensively in different places during that year. In 1802 he was appointed to New London circuit, which then extended from the Thames to the Connecticut river. "Here we had," he says, "some excellent, though small societies, especially in New London and Norwich, with whom and my highly esteemed colleague, Michael Coate, I enjoyed great satisfaction and many happy seasons."

The next two years he labored on New Rochelle circuit, (N. Y.,) and during the following two in New York city. A most remarkable revival of religion, such as had never been known before in that city, prevailed through these two years, during which the custom of inviting mourners to the altar for prayer was first introduced by Mr. Hunt, in order to prevent the confusion which resulted from the former practice of praying for them in all parts of the chapel. In 1807 he returned to New England, and travelled Litchfield circuit. The insuing three years, he had charge of the Rhinebeck (N. Y.) District; the next three he spent in New England, on Redding and Middletown circuits, (Conn.) Returning to the State of New York, in 1814, he travelled Acton circuit two years, after which we find him again in Connecticut, on the Stamford circuit — the first New England appointment of Jesse Lee. Thence he passed, in 1817, to Bridgeport, (Conn.) In 1818 he labored on Courtland circuit, (N. Y.,) and the following year in New York city, with a band of colleagues, most of whose names are familiar in the history of the church; among them were Samuel Merwin, Laban Clark, B. Hibbard, and Tobias Spicer. He continued in the city two years, at the expiration of which time he returned to New England, and travelled Redding circuit, (Conn.,) as colleague of the venerable Laban Clark. After laboring there two years, he was returned as Supernumerary, but continued to move to and fro, preaching as he was able. Four years he spent in this relation, on different circuits in Connecticut.

He still lives, at the advanced age of 79, rejoicing over the results of those extensive and varied labors which he shared with the pioneers of Methodism in New England, and looking with cheerful hope for the summons to join in heaven his old comrades in the warfare of the faith. His life is a striking example of the travels, labors, and changes of the early Itinerancy. Of his excellent character we are not permitted to speak, suffice it to say that he is an eminent example of that unblemished and fragrant reputation which distinguishes most of the retired veterans of our cause — respected, venerated and loved by all who knew him.

Of the religious condition of New England when the Methodist ministry entered it, he gives the following opinion: — "Some have asserted that the effects of the 'great awakening' prepared, more or less, the way for the doctrines of Justification by Faith, Sanctification, the Witness of the Spirit, &c., as preached by the Methodists; but to this I cannot accede. Fifty years had passed, since that time, before our entrance into this field. The Revolutionary war had absorbed all minds; owing to this cause, and the prevalent doctrines, especially that of final perseverance, we scarcely found a vestige of personal religious experience among the people. I conversed with respectable Congregational ministers on subjects of experimental piety, who asserted that no one could *know* his sins forgiven in the present life. To enter into covenant relation with the church, and attend to the ordinances, was the way to obtain a hope, and any who professed more than this were stigmatized as enthusiasts. Hence we were opposed not only by infidels and Universalists, but also by our Calvinistic brethren, who considered us intruders, warning their people against us as deceivers, frequently after our preaching, and sometimes interrupting us while preaching. We had to contend earnestly for the faith and truths of the Gospel. However, we continued to preach the *knowledge* of salvation by the remission of sins, until witnesses of its truth were raised up in many places. A spirit of inquiry was awakened, and light increased, so that our Congregational brethren (who were always willing to receive our converts into their churches) soon began to preach the necessity of a change of heart. Our fields of labor in those days were properly missionary, though we had not the security of temporal support which missionaries have at the present day. Several of our talented brethren, seeing no prospect of a competent support for their families, left the Itinerant field for other churches, and other business, though but few of them succeeded well. I am approximating the completion of my fourscore years, and my interest in the prosperity of our Zion is not abated, nor do I regret the toils and privations of those early days. I only grieve that I have not done more and better for the interests of Christ's kingdom. The great atonement made for sin, and the consequent sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, are my only hope of future and eternal rest."

JOHN ALLEN began his ministerial travels in 1788, and was appointed to Montgomery circuit, Maryland, under the care of Rev. Nelson Reed. The next year we trace him to Hartford circuit, in the same State. In 1790 he labored on Baltimore circuit. He was a man of extraordinary power in the pulpit, and was therefore deemed specially qualified to co-operate with Lee in arousing the New England churches. He left Maryland — the point from which most of the pioneer preachers of Methodism in New England took their march — and entering the new eastern field in 1791, was appointed to Middlefields circuit, Conn., with the noble minded Roberts. In 1792 he was alone on the newly formed Needham circuit, Mass., and here terminated his connection with the laborious, suffering, but prevailing phalanx of his Itinerant colleagues. In the next Minutes he is reported as withdrawn. "He was," says one who heard and knew him, "a Boanerges, at first. I never heard his equal in rolling out the terrors of Sinai. In early life he had a view to the medical profession. After spending a few years as an Itinerant, he wished rest and worldly accommodation."* He became a Congregationalist preacher, some time after a Universalist, and at last settled in the practice of medicine. The last glimpse we have been able to get of him, was an interview which he accidentally had on the highway with a veteran Itinerant, one of his old fellow laborers, who received from him the continued avowal of his erroneous opinions, and parted from him with a last admonition and affecting remembrances of other days.

Lemuel Smith joined the Itinerant ranks in 1788, and continued in their struggles and toils for eight years. His first appointment was on Cambridge circuit, (N. Y.) In 1789 he was colleague to the excellent Peter Moriarty, on the New Rochelle circuit, (N. Y.) The next year we find him on New Lebanon circuit, (N. Y.) In 1791 he was sent to Hartford, (Conn.,) with Menzies Rainor. The ensuing year he travelled alone the first circuit formed in Rhode Island. We trace him thence to Litchfield, in company with the indomitable Ostrander, in 1793; to Tolland, with Pickering, in 1794; and to Granville, in 1795. The next year he is reported among the located.

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* Private letter to the Writer.

Menzies Rainor is also one among the many who, in those days, as in the present, having put their hand to the plough, turned back, through either impatience with its fatigues, declension of zeal, or the domestic privations which the extended journies and scanty pecuniary provision of the Itinerancy at that time imposed. He entered the ministry in 1790, and travelled Duchess (N. Y.) circuit with Peter Moriarty, under the superintendence of Freeborn Garrettson. The next year he was, as we have seen, the colleague of Lemuel Smith, at Hartford. In 1792 he labored at Lynn. Subsequently he travelled respectively the Elizabethtown (N. J.) and Middletown (Conn.) circuits, and 1795 withdrew from the Conference, and afterwards from the church. He was a young man of promise, and very acceptable among the people as a preacher. Having engaged himself to marry a young lady whose family was unwilling that she should share his privations as an Itinerant he chose the alternative of ressigning his ministerial post. It was done with deliberation, with frank notification of his purpose to his Presiding Elder, Rev. George Roberts, and with the avowal of undiminished confidence in the doctrines and discipline of Methodism. He soon entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, and subsequently became a Universalist, " giving an example," says one who shared his Itinerant trials, " of the dangerous consequences of leaving the work to which we are called, for worldly advantages."

Robert Green joined the Itinerancy in 1788. He also was from Maryland, and travelled, the first year of his ministerial life, on Montgomery circuit, in that State, with John Allen, whom he afterwards accompanied to New England. In 1789 and '90, he travelled successively two circuits in Maryland, under the superintendence of Rev. Nelson Reed. In 1791 he came to the assistance of the little band of pioneers in the East, and was appointed to the newly-formed circuit of Stockbridge, Mass. As usual in those days, he was rapidly transferred in all directions. We trace him the next year to Albany, thence to Columbia, (N. Y.,) thence to Cambridge, (N. Y.,) and the next year (1795) back again to New England, on Pittsfield circuit; again to Albany, where he continued two years, and thence to Newberg, (N. J.,) where also he labored two years. The ensuing year (1800) he is reported among the "located," and disappears from our view.

Of the fourteen preachers who had thus far entered New England, but two, so far as we can ascertain, either changed their denominational relations or apostatized. The others all continued till death in their laborious ministry, or located, "through weakness of body or family concerns." The great proportion of the Methodist preachers of that day, throughout the nation, were compelled sooner or later to retire into the local ranks, by the necessities of their families, or the prostration of their health through extraordinary labors. Of about 650 who belonged to the Itinerant ministry, prior to 1800, about 500 died located, or continue so yet, besides the many who, after an interval of few or many years spent in the local ranks, re-entered the "travelling connection." Most of those, however, who were constrained to retire from the regular ministry, continued to preach laboriously while "working with their own hands" for bread, and have done inestimable service in fortifying, locally, our cause.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## LEE AND ASBURY IN NEW ENGLAND, IN 1791–2.

Lee returns to the East — Preaches at Marblehead — Ipswich — Lynn — Excursion into New Hampshire — Preaches in Portsmouth — Newburyport — Windham — Needham — Excursion to Rhode Island — Excursion to Western New England — View of his Labors — Asbury enters New England — His incessant Preaching — Scenes at Stepney — Stratford — New Haven — Middletown — Newport — Providence — Boston — Lynn — His return Westward — Results of the Year.

Let us now turn again to the leader of the New England phalanx. Lee was appointed, as we have seen, Presiding Elder with a District which comprehended the whole Methodist interest in New England, and the recently formed circuit of Kingston, in Upper Canada. He devoted his attention, however, chiefly to the region of the Atlantic coast, visiting but once the societies in Connecticut. By the latter part of July, he was again at Lynn. On Sunday, the 31st of that month, he preached twice at this his favorite appointment, and in the evening at Marblehead. Of the latter place he says: — "At six o'clock, I preached on Luke 16: 31: 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' I found much satisfaction in my own mind, while I was teaching the people, and there was some appearance of religion in their looks and behavior. There is a considerable stir in this town, respecting the sentiments of the Methodists, and a great many wish us to depart out of their coasts; but the more the lion roars, the more I am encouraged."

During the same week, he preached in Salem, Manchester, and Appleton in the old parish of Ipswich. In the latter place he met with one of those instances of the usefulness of his ministry which so frequently occurred to cheer him in his incessant labors. "When I got there," he says, "the woman of the house met me at the door, and began to weep, and said she had found the Lord precious to her soul; that she was deeply affected by my preaching when I was round two weeks before; and that when she heard me the last evening, she was so distressed that she could not rest, and returned home, crying to the Lord to have mercy upon her, till about 2 o'clock in the morning, at which time the Lord set her soul at liberty. She was well satisfied that her sins were forgiven. She then added, 'let others say what they will against you, I bless the Lord that I ever heard your voice!'"

The next day he was back again at Lynn, and on the day following (Sabbath) preached, with great effect, to a full and weeping audience, several of whom he baptized, and afterwards administered the Lord's Supper to nearly fifty communicants. The "little flock" at this place was rapidly increasing. Its influence had been felt already in the upper village. Two classes had been formed there, of which he speaks in the following terms — "We met the women's class at Wood End, at 5 o'clock; several were under deep conviction, and wept bitterly while I spoke to them. One had lately been converted, and seemed lost in wonder, love and praise. We met the men's class at night, and had several persons among us that did not belong to it; some of them were deeply distressed, and seemed to be determined never to rest till their souls were converted."

Cheered by these favorable indications, he extended his labors in every direction. In about one week he was on his way to New Hampshire. We have, however, notices of his visits to but two places in that State during this excursion. On the 26th August, "I rode," he says, "to Greenland, in New Hampshire State, and dined at Dr. Marsh's; then rode to Portsmouth, and put up at Mr. Walton's, who is a Separatist minister. We had a meeting in a private house. At his request, I preached on Psa. 1: 6. I found it to be a time of much life and love, and some of the people appeared much affected. When meeting was ended, some of the people blessed God for our meeting."

On his way back he preached, Sept. 2, in the evening, at Newburyport. "The house," he says, "was greatly crowded, in every part; the hearers were very attentive, and I spoke with more than commom liberty; I felt a love for precious souls, and maintained that Christ had died for all; and that the Lord was willing to save them all. I bore a public testimony against particular election, and showed the cruelty of absolute reprobation. The Lord seemed to open the hearts of the people to receive the truths that were delivered.

"Friday, 23. I rode to Windham, and at Josiah Sweet's, at night, I preached on Phil. 1: 22: 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' This is the first time that a Methodist ever preached in the town. I had a good congregation, and some of them were much affected by the Word. *I think the time is near when the work of the Lord will begin to revive in this part of the world*, and if the Lord work by us, our good mistaken brethren will be brought to say, 'Send, Lord, by whom thou wilt send.'"

On the 6th of the next month he preached the first Methodist sermon in Needham, with much interest, which was shared fully by the people. They entreated him to tarry longer, and revisit them often. He was on another errand, however, and could not delay. We have already recorded his flying tour through Rhode Island, the preceding year. He was now on his way thither again, to ascertain the effects of those labors, and the practicability of forming a circuit in that State, at the ensuing Conference. Leaving Needham the next day, he arrived in Providence by the same night, and preached the following evening. The ensuing day he rode to his friend, Gen. Lippet's, at Cranston, and "was very kindly received," and on Friday, the 11th, he preached at the General's "with more than usual comfort." "My heart," he says, "was drawn out in love and pity towards my hearers. In this place the people know but little of the life and power of religion, and it is very seldom that they can get to any place of public worship. Seeing how destitute they are of the preaching of the gospel, I was brought again to pray earnestly that the Lord would send forth more laborers into the vineyard."

His visits and consultations in Rhode Island led him to project a circuit in that State, which, as we shall by and by see, was recognized by the next Conference, and included most of those beautiful villages on the shores of Providence River and Narraganset Bay that now sustain Methodist churches.

Again he returned to Lynn, but on his arrival found Rev. R. Bonsal, "just come from New York to preach the gospel in these parts." * Mr. Lee could now be spared from the

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* Mr. Bonsal, it seems, tarried but a few months in New England. His name was never among the Eastern appointments. The next year he labored at Annapolis, Maryland.

circuit. Leaving it, therefore, in the care of Messrs. Smith and Bonsal, he immediately departed, proclaiming the gospel of "the kingdom," through the interior of Massachusetts and Connecticut — preaching at Boston, Needham, Sterling, and Wilbraham, in the former, and Enfield, East Windsor, Middlefield, Derby, Oxford, Newtown, Redding, Dantown, Middlesex, Wilton, Stratford, Hartford, Tolland, Ellington, and numerous other places in the latter. He found a prosperous Society formed at Enfield, and a visible improvement in the various appointments which he had established while laboring in Connecticut. "I see," he says, "that the Lord has prospered his work among the Methodists since I visited this part of the vineyard."

Such were the excursions of this extraordinary man, for a little more than one month, (33 days,) during which he travelled 517 miles, and preached forty sermons. "I have reason," he says, on his return to Lynn, "to hope that the Lord has given me fresh strength and courage to go forward in his ways." During the last fourteen months, he had preached 321 sermons, besides delivering 24 public exhortations, and making almost continual journeys into New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and still he exclaims, "Forward!" with "fresh strength and courage."

A great man, both in word and deed, was this apostle of Methodism in the East, but a greater than he also passed through these same regions, during the period under review — a man whose ministerial labors and travels have scarcely been paralleled since the days of St. Paul, — not even in the history of the tireless Wesley. The apostolic Bishop of Methodism, Francis Asbury, entered Connecticut on the 4th of June, 1791.* Though most repulsive vexations attended his visit, his notices of the country are expressive of that hopefulness which usually characterizes great minds — minds conscious of the energy that secures great results. On arriving at Redding, where Lee had formed his second class in Connecticut, he exclaims: — "I feel faith to believe that this visit to New England will be blest to my own soul, and the souls of others. We are now in Connecticut, and never out of sight of a house, and sometimes we have a view of many churches and steeples, built very neatly of wood. I do feel as if there had been religion in this country once; and I apprehend there is a little in form and theory left. There may have been a praying ministry and people here, but I fear they are now spiritually dead, and am persuaded that family and private prayer is very little practiced. Could these people be brought to constant, fervent prayer, the Lord would come down and work wonderfully among them. I find my mind fixed on God, and the work of God." He preached at Redding, on the Sabbath, with much satisfaction, and rode, the same day, to Newtown, where, though "sick and weary," he again ascended the pulpit. He moved on, without cessation, preaching, as was his wont, wherever an opportunity offered — in churches, when allowed; where these were denied, in town-houses, and where these were closed, in private houses. The next day after his labors at Redding and Newtown, he passed to Stepney, and delivered, in a private house, an awakening and melting exhortation. Thence he went, the same day, to Chestnut-hill, where, though he was not expected, word was sent round among the neighbors, and he addressed the hastily gathered assembly; but finding, by the time he had closed with prayer, that many others had arrived, he resumed the exercises, and "exhorted again, for about forty minutes." Thence he drove on, some miles further, and in the evening "had a small family meeting," at which he preached. Such is but a specimen of the daily course of this truly wonderful man, not only in New England, but through the length and breadth of the nation, and through nearly half a century of his life.

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* Asbury's Journal, Anno. 1791.

The next day, 7th, he arrived at Stratford, the town in which Lee formed his first New England society. The time of trials had not yet passed. "Good news!" he exclaims, in a manner characteristic of himself, "they have voted that the town-house shall be shut. Well, where shall we preach? Some of the selectmen, one at least, granted access. I felt unwilling to go, as it is always my way not to push myself into any public house. We had close work on Isaiah 55 : 6, 7. Some smiled, some laughed, some swore, some talked, some prayed, some wept. Had it been a house of our own, I should not have been surprised had the windows been broken. I refused to preach there any more, and it was well I did — two of the Esquires were quite displeased at our admittance. We met the class, and found some gracious souls. The Methodists have a society, consisting of about twenty members, some of them converted; but they have no house of worship. They may now make a benefit of a calamity; being denied the use of other houses, they will the more earnestly labor to get one of their own." Notwithstanding these rebuffs, he tarried the next day, and preached in a private house. "It was a time of comfort to the few seekers and believers present."

The day following he reached New Haven, and preached to an audience which included several of the collegians, President Styles, and other clergymen. "When I had done," he writes, "no one spoke to me. I thought to-day of dear Mr. Whitefield's words to Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pilmore, at their first coming over to America: 'Ah!' said he, 'if ye were Calvinists ye would take the country before ye.'

We visited the college chapel, at the hour of prayer. I wished to go through the whole, to inspect the interior arrangements, but no one invited me. The divines were grave, and the students were attentive ; they used me like a fellow Christian in coming to hear me preach, and like a stranger in other respects. Should Cokesbury or Baltimore ever furnish the opportunity, I, in my turn, will requite their behavior by treating them as friends, brethren, and gentlemen."

But what were such trials to the indomitable Asbury? Trifles, which he brushed aside, as he "pressed on to the mark of the prize of his high calling." We still trace him onward, "crying aloud and sparing not," the next day at Wallingford, the following one at Wallingford-Farms, to a "tender" and "alarmed" assembly; the day after, (Sabbath,) twice at Middlefields, and at night, the same day, in the Congregational church at Middletown where he proclaimed, "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son and love one another." And when, after this weary day of labor, he had to ride "a mile out of town, to get a lodging," he comforted himself with the reflection that "it was to the poorer classes of people that this preaching was anciently blessed." Could he now revisit that beautiful city, he would be welcomed to scores of consecrated homes, where his name is revered as a beloved household word, and he might there also make the promised requital to the learned divines of New Haven, in an institution which has been distinguished by the presidency of men who would have dignified the supreme chair of Yale.

He still pressed onward, passing through Haddam, New London, "where," says he, "my church was the court-house, my text 2 Peter, 3 : 15," Stonington, Westerly, R. I., Charlestown, and Newport, where, he writes, "we stayed two nights at our kind friend's, Br. Green, a New-Light

Baptist. I lectured the second night, from Isaiah 64 : 1–7. There was some life among the people, although it was late, and the congregation like our Lord's disciples before his passion. There is also a Jews' synagogue, and a Moravian chapel. *I expect before many years the Methodists will also have a house of worship here.*"

On Saturday, 18th, he started on his way to Providence, remarking ; "On this journey I feel much humbled. I am unknown, and have small congregations, to which I may add, a jar in sentiment ; but I do not dispute. My soul is brought into close communion. I should not have felt for these people and for the preachers as I now do, had I not visited them ; perhaps I may do something for them in a future day. We came to Bristol, and should have gone farther, but Captain G—— saw us, and took us to his house. At the request of a few persons, I preached in the court-house, to about a hundred people, and enforced, 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,' and found a degree of liberty. Some time ago there was the beginning of a work here, but the few souls who began are now discouraged from meeting together. I fear religion is extinguished by confining it too much to church and Sunday service, and reading of sermons. I feel that I am not among my own people, although I believe there are some who fear God."

The next day he was declaring in Providence the "acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God," from Isaiah 61 : 1, 2, 3. The day following, he visited among some serious families, and preached in the evening. He left the city, believing "*that even we shall have something to do in this town.*" He spent a day at Easton, where he preached once, but called it a day of "rest," a "solemn, happy, and solitary retreat," where his "soul entered into renewed life."

On the 23d he reached Boston. The prospects of Methodism had scarcely improved yet. He records, with emphasis, his inhospitable reception: — "I felt much pressed in spirit, as if the door was not open. As it was court time, we were put to some difficulty in getting entertainment. It was appointed for me to preach at Murray's church — not at all pleasing to me, and that which made it worse for me was, that I had only about twenty or thirty people to preach to in a large house. It appeared to me that those who professed friendship for us were ashamed to publish us. On Friday evening I preached again; my congregation was somewhat larger. Owing, perhaps, to the loudness of my voice, the sinners were noisy in the streets. My subject was Rev. 3: 17, 18. I was disturbed, and not at liberty, although I sought it. I have done with Boston, until we can obtain a lodging, a house to preach in, and some to join us. Some things here are to be admired, in the place and among the people; their bridges are great works, and none are ashamed of labor. Of their hospitality I cannot boast. In Charleston, S. C., wicked Charleston, six years ago, a stranger, I was kindly invited to eat and drink by many — here by none."

He had faith in the future, however, and the future has justified it. "The Methodists," he says, "have no house, but *their time may come*." In our day, some ten pulpits are occupied in the city by his sons in the ministry; they have advanced, on an average, of nearly one church to every six years since, and are more numerous than were all the Puritan churches of the city at that time. He tarried in Boston two days, and left it on the third for Lynn, where he was "agreeably surprised" to find a "Methodist chapel raised." After his discouraging reception in Boston, he speaks with enthusiasm of Lynn, calling it the "perfection of beauty." He says, "It is seated on a plain, under a range of craggy hills, and open to the sea; there is a promising society, an exceedingly well behaved congregation; these things, doubtless, made all pleasing to me. My first subject was Rom. 8: 33; in the afternoon, Acts 4: 12. He adds, with prophetic foresight, "Here we shall make a firm stand, and from this central point, from Lynn, shall the light of Methodism and truth radiate through the State."

On the 28th, he rode to Marblehead. "When I entered this place," he writes, "my heart was more melted towards its inhabitants than to any in these parts, with the exception of Lynn. After consultation, and some altercation among themselves, the committee invited me to preach in Mr. Story's meeting-house, which I did accordingly, at four o'clock, on Acts 24: 17, 18. I was led to speak alarmingly, whilst I pointed out the gospel as descriptive of their misery and need of mercy. Brother Lee preached in the evening to a great number of people in and about Mr. Martin's house. Next morning, weak as I was, I could not forbear speaking to them on 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.'" He went next day to Salem, but was denied access to any of the churches. He delivered his message, however, in the court-house, from Romans 5: 6, 7. At Manchester, he met a more courteous reception, and was admitted by the selectmen to the parish church.

He returned to Lynn, where he tarried ten days, preaching, meeting classes, baptizing, administering the Lord's Supper, and visiting from house to house. On the Sabbath, he preached three times. "My first subject," he says, "was 'the great salvation.' In the afternoon, I spoke on Titus 2: 11, 12, and had liberty; in the evening, my subject was Mat. 11: 28–30; the congregation was attentive, and my mind enjoyed sweet peace; although, outwardly, we were uncomfortable, the meeting-house being open, and the weather very cool for the season. *I feel as if God would work in these States, and give us a great harvest.*" And again he predicts, "that a glorious work of God will be wrought here," and adds, "several people are under awakenings at this time; my staying so long may be of the Lord."

Ten days in one place was a long delay for this indefatigable man of God. On the 13th of July, he set his face towards the West, and again we trace him through a rapid passage, from Lynn to Springfield, where, on the 15th, he lifted up his voice, declaring, "It is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you;" the people were "moved," and one individual "under deep conviction." He entered Connecticut, and, after preaching on the way, arrived at Hartford on the 19th, where he addressed an assembly, from "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." He passed to East Hartford, where he preached with more than usual freedom, to a "feeling congregation." The next day he was at West Farmington, and had a "gracious shower at the Quarterly Meeting." At Litchfield, where he delivered a discourse the ensuing day, in the "Episcopal Church," he characterizes the times, by remarking, "I think Morse's account of his countrymen is near the truth; never have I seen any people who would talk so long, so correctly, and so seriously, about trifles." He continued his route through Cornwall, New Britain, to Albany, preaching by night and by day.

Such was the rapid tour through New England, of this great apostle of American Methodism. It occupied less than eight weeks, but he had scattered the good seed broadcast over Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Masssachusetts; had counselled with, and directed the few laborers in the field, and surveyed it sufficiently to guide him in his subsequent plans respecting it. He leaves New England with this reflection: "I am led to think the eastern church will find this saying hold true in the Methodists, viz: —'I will provoke you to jealousy by a people that were no people; and by a foolish nation will I anger you.'"

Thus much have we been able to ascertain respecting the laborers and labors of the ecclesiastical year, from May, 1791, to August, 1792. What were the results? We have but scattered intimations in the slight records of the times, but enough to show that it was the most prosperous of the three years which had passed since the introduction of Methodism into New England. Extensive revivals had occurred in several sections of the country. Lee informs us, "that there was a considerable awakening among the people in different places, not far from Lynn;"* that a door was opened for the outspread of Methodism in the Eastern States; that invitations for preachers multiplied in various directions; and, notwithstanding the general prejudice against the new church, its members increased both in numbers and respectability.† The circuits in Connecticut had been blessed with much prosperity. Of Redding, Bishop Asbury remarks, "God has wrought wonders in this town; the spirit of prayer is amongst the people, and several souls have been brought to God.‡ On the Hartford circuit, an extensive reformation had prevailed. Demonstrations of the divine Spirit, like those witnessed in the days of Edwards and Whitefield, were again common among the towns on the banks of the Connecticut. At Tolland, and the neighboring villages, the interest was especially profound. Asbury estimates that one hundred and fifty souls were converted there, and that twice the number were under awakenings in the societies around. "I felt," he says, "very solemn among them. Brothers Smith and Rainor have been owned of the Lord in these parts."* He also speaks of a "melting among the people," at Pittsfield, where the "Lord was at work."† About two hundred had been converted since the last Conference on the Albany District, which extended over this part of Massachusetts.‡

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Anno. 1791. † Ibid.

‡ Journals, July, 1792.

Three additional circuits, wholly or partly in New England, were reported this year, and the number of members returned from circuits bearing New England names, was 1358. The few and scattered preachers of Methodism, had made full proof of their ministry. Though still subjected to severe privations and annoying vexations, a goodly multitude of renewed souls now greeted and befriended them in their incessant travels, and welcomed them, after the fatigues of the day, to humble, but comfortable and consecrated homes. A Methodist people had been raised up; few, indeed, and feeble, but never to cease, we trust, till the heavens and the earth are no more.

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* Journals, August, 1792. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

NOTE. At the New York Conference of 1790, it was proposed to hold a session in Connecticut, in July, 1791, but we have reason to doubt that it was held. Bishop Asbury passed through that State, as we have seen, in the month of July, on the day appointed for the Conference (23d); he travelled by a rocky, mountainous way to Cornwall, and preached to "about one hundred and fifty hearers" but makes no allusion to the presence of the preachers, or to any Conference business. He left the next day. Mr. Lee's Journal indicates that he himself was pursuing his labors at Lynn the next week after the appointed time for this Conference, and, therefore, renders it probable that it was not held. It is evident, also, from his biographer's notice of the constitution of his New England District, that the appointments we have been reviewing, for 1791, were made, as we have stated, at the New York Conference of May 26, and not at the proposed Connecticut Conference two months subsequent. No material business, therefore, could have been transacted at the latter, if it was held. The biographer of Lee affirms, also, that "no Conference prior to 1792 had been held farther north than New York or Albany." (Chap. XIII.) We suppose the affimative is made on the authority of Lee's private papers. Dr. Bangs has included this appointed Conference among the actual sessions of that year, but privately informs us that he did so solely on the authority of the appointment in the Minutes. He has been able to find no other intimation of it. The Rev. Enoch Mudge, the first native preacher in New England, a personal friend of Lee, and a resident of Lynn at the time, affirms that Lee was in Lynn not only (as we have stated) the week after the date of the Conference, but during the week in which it is alleged to have been held, and that no such Conference was ever held. The Rev. Aaron Hunt, of the New York Conference, the third oldest member of any Conference in the New World, had his appointment this very year in Connecticut, and has sent us the assurance that the first Conference in Connecticut was that of Tolland, in 1793.

*Mr. Lee does mention this Connecticut Conference*, in his History of Methodism, and this fact would, at first view, seem conclusive of the question. It did so seem to the author, till a thorough investigation nearly demonstrated the contrary. We found, on examining his "History," that his statements of the sessions of Conferences were simply copies from the Minutes, with an introductory phrase stating how many "we had," and their numerical order prefixed. It is quite possible that these statements were cut out of the printed Minutes, and sent thus to the printer. This is an extraordinary supposition, to be sure, but the errors into which he falls cannot otherwise be explained. In several cases *he follows the previous announcements of Conferences in the Minutes, when if he had but referred to his own journals or memory, he would have seen that these announcements had not been followed.* It is from this consideration that we attach little or no importance to his recognition of the alleged Connecticut Conference. For example, by looking into the Minutes of 1793, it will be seen that a Conference is appointed to meet in "Connecticut, Sept. 8, 1794," and by turning to Lee's History for that year, it will be seen that he enumerates, (copying from the Minutes, doubtless,) among others, "the 116th, in Connecticut," for that year. Asbury traversed that State about the time, and Lee was in New England, the leader of its growing hosts. Now, would not these facts be as conclusive in this case as the same facts could be in the above instance? And yet it is well known that no Conference was held that year in Connecticut, but at Wilbraham, in Massachusetts. Asbury gives the record of the fact. (See Journals, Anno. 1794.) Abel Bliss, Esq., of Wilbraham, entertained the Bishop during this Conference. Lee himself was present, preached, and concluded it by an address, which is yet spoken of with admiration by old preachers and laymen who heard it. Here, then, is proof positive of our remark on Lee's mode of starting these sessions.

Take another instance, though not so striking a one. In the Minutes of 1791, a Conference is appointed for "Lynn, Aug. 1, 1792," and in Lee's History it is put down (copied from the Minutes, as we suppose) with that date. Lee was present; yet it will be perceived from Asbury's journal that he did not arrive in the town till "about midnight" of the date, and the Conference met August 3d.

In fine, the evidence seems to us conclusive that no Conference was held in Connecticut in 1791, and that the Conference of Lynn, in 1792, was the *first in New England.*

# CHAPTER IX.

## LABORERS AND LABORS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1792–3.

Session of the first New England Conference — Asbury — His Character — Lee — Hope Hull — Services at the Conference — Appointments — Membership — Jeremiah Cosden — Joshua Taylor — His Christian Experience and Ministry — Smith Weeks — Phillip Wager — James Coleman — Richard Swain — Hope Hull — Fredus Aldridge — David Kendall — Robert Dillon — Jordan Rexford — Lee Itinerating — Asbury re-enters New England — Methodism Prevails — Results of the Year.

MR. LEE arrived in Lynn, from his excursion to Connecticut, in the early part of May, 1792. He continued his labors in that town and its vicinity, till the first week in August — a period memorable in our history, as the date of the first Conference held in the State of Massachusetts, if not the first in New England.* The preceding ecclesiastical year had included more than fourteen months. After so long a separation, and untold privations, labors, and sufferings, it was, indeed, a "holy convocation," a high festival, for the little company of scattered Itinerants, to meet in their *first Conference*. They assembled, as was befitting, in the first, and still unfinished, Methodist Chapel of Massachusetts. Asbury speaks of it, at the time, as a matter of congratulation, that "in Lynn we have the *outside* of a house completed."* Had we the necessary data, it would be a grateful task to paint the picture of that first and memorable convention of New England Methodist preachers. We have been able, however, to catch but a glimpse of it. We know the number, but hardly the names of those who were present. "Our Conference," says Asbury, "met, consisting of eight persons, much united, beside myself." † The truly great Asbury is himself the most imposing figure in the group. He was yet short of fifty years of age, and in the maturity of his physical and intellectual strength; his person was slight, but vigorous and erect; his eye stern, but bright; his brow began to show those wrinkles, the effects of extraordinary cares and fatigues, which afterwards formed so marked a feature of his strongly characteristic face; his countenance was expressive of decision, energy, sagacity, benignity, and was shaded, at times, by an aspect of deep anxiety, if not depression; his attitude was dignified and graceful; his voice sonorous and commanding. His parallel, for practical sense and practical energy, can scarcely be found; as a ruler of State, or a commander of armies, he would have ranked among the greatest men of history. We will venture the remark, in all deliberation, that if ever an impartial ecclesiastical history of this nation is written, Francis Asbury, as well for his personal character, as for being the chief founder of its largest religious organization, will occupy a position in it above the competition of any other name whatsoever. During about fifty years, it is estimated that, besides innumerable public exhortations, he preached, upon an average, one sermon a day. He exceeded even Wesley in his travels, averaging more than six thousand miles a year. The extent of his journeys, during his ministry of forty-five years, in the United States alone, was equal, upon an average, to the circumference of the globe, every four years! and this by private conveyance, and over the worst roads, in the infancy of the nation. During the last thirty-two years of his life, he presided in *two hundred and twenty-four* Annual Conferences, and ordained about *four thousand* persons in the travelling or local ministry.* "When he commenced his labors in this country, there were about six hundred members; when he fell, it was victoriously, at the head of *two hundred and twelve thousand.*" † We repeat, then, that this first Methodist Conference in the East, was dignified by the presidency of the greatest man in the ecclesiastical annals of our country.

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* The time appointed for this Conference, in the Minutes of the preceding year, was the first of August; but it appears, from Asbury's journal, that it began on the 3d.

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* Journals, Aug., 1792. † Ibid.

By his side sat the indomitable Lee, second only, in the ranks of the ministry, for labors and travels, to its great leader. We have sketched, and are yet further to illustrate his character, by the narrative of his labors. He was about the period of middle age, stout, athletic, full of vigor of muscle and feeling. His face was strongly marked by shrewdness, tenderness, and cheerfulness, if not humor; his manners, by unpretending dignity, remarkable temperance in debate, and fervid piety, mixed frequently, however, with vivid sallies of wit, and startling repartees. This trait of *bonhommie* was not without its advantages; it gave him access to the popular mind, and aided in sustaining him in the peculiar trials of his ministry. No man of less cheerful temperament could have brooked the chilling treatment he encountered while travelling the New England States, without colleague, and without sympathy. This *solitariness* in a strange land, often without the stimulus of even persecution, but rendered doubly chilling by universal indifference or the most frigid politeness, was one of the strongest tests of his character. Those only can appreciate it, who have endured it. He sat in the little band of his fellow-laborers, with a cheerful aspect, for though he had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, it was now springing up, and whitening for the harvest, over the land. If it had been but as "a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains," yet it now promised, that the fruit thereof would yet shake like Lebanon.

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, vol. 2.

† Sketches and Incidents, or a Budget from the Saddle Bags of a Superannuated Itinerant, vol. 1.

In the group sat, also, the young and eloquent Hope Hull, the Summerfield of the time, attractive with the beauty of talent and of holiness — "that extraordinary young man," as Thomas Ware called him, "under whose discourses the people were as clay in the hands of the potter." Asbury brought him, on his tour to this Conference, from the South, where he had been persecuted out of Savannah. There were, also, the youthful and talented Rainor, fresh from the revivals on Hartford circuit, and undiverted yet from the labors of the Itinerancy by the love of ease or domestic comfort, and Allen, the "Boanerges," not yet swerving under the delusions of false doctrine. Besides these, it is probable that Lemuel Smith and Jeremiah Cosden were present.

Asbury introduced the occasion, by a discourse on 1 John, 4 : 1–6. On Saturday he preached an ordination sermon, to a "very solemn congregation," from the text, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." There was preaching every night during the session. The Sabbath "was the last day, that great day of the feast." A love feast was held in the morning, after which Asbury preached on 1 Cor., 6 : 19, 20. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." In the afternoon, John Allen preached, and the Bishop gave a "farewell exhortation" to the people, who were deeply affected at his parting counsels. The next day he was away again, "making a hasty flight," as usual, and in four days he had passed over 170 miles from Lynn, on his way to other Conferences.*

The Minutes of this year record the following ministerial arrangements for New England: — Jesse Lee, *Elder; Lynn*, Menzies Rainor; *Boston*, Jeremiah Cosden; *Needham*, John Allen; *Providence*, Lemuel Smith. Jacob Brush, *Elder; Fairfield*, Joshua Taylor and Smith Weeks; *Litchfield*, Philip Wager and James Coleman; *Middletown*, Richard Swain and Aaron Hunt; *Hartford*, Hope Hull, George Roberts and F. Aldridge; *Pittsfield*, D. Kendall, R. Dillon, and J. Rexford. This last circuit was on the Albany district, and under the Presiding Eldership of Freeborn Garrettson. The district of Jacob Brush extended over a large portion of the State of New York, though a majority of the places named, as comprised within its limits, were in Connecticut. It was stated in our last chapter, that three *additional* circuits were reported the present year; by this was meant, the actual numerical increase of circuits; there were really four new ones reported, but one of those reported the last year was merged in a new arrangement of the Connecticut circuits. Boston, Needham, Providence and Pittsfield circuits, appear, for the first time, in the Minutes of this year. The first was detached from Lynn, and the second and third were surveyed, as we have seen, by Mr. Lee, during the preceding year. The last was formed by preachers on the Albany District.

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* Asbury Journals, Aug., 1792.

The membership on the Eastern circuits was still very limited. Boston returned but 15 ; Lynn 118, (a gain of 60 since the preceding Conference ;) Needham, 34. As we advance westward, it largely increases ; Middletown returned 124, and Hartford nearly 200. The latter circuit had gained 167 during the past year — the result, doubtless, of the extensive reformation which had prevailed among its appointments. The circuits still more westward, had yet larger returns, but we cannot ascertain what proportion of them pertained to New England.

We have already recorded what information we have been able to collect respecting most of the preachers appointed to New England the present year. Of the remainder we know but little.

JEREMIAH COSDEN entered the Itinerancy in 1789, and travelled Northampton circuit with Christopher Spry, who, also, subsequently came to New England. The next year he was in the city of Baltimore. We cannot trace him among the appointments of 1791, but he re-appears the following year, and is appointed to Boston. His residence in New England was limited to that year. In 1793 he returned to the middle States, and labored at Alexandria ; the next year he is reported as withdrawn. He was a young man of education and talent, an agreeable and popular preacher, and distinguished by a generous spirit, which his pecuniary circumstances allowed him somewhat to indulge. He arrived from the South in time for the Lynn Conference, where, it is reported, two of the way-worn preachers from the Connecticut River, who had received little or nothing in their toils but bread from man and grace from God, appeared, at first, in rather rusty plight, but re-appeared the next day, thoroughly arrayed in priestly black, through the generosity of their former co-laborer in the South, Jeremiah Cosden. Alas! that the rewards of "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" could not counterbalance, in his estimation, the sacrifices which "the man that warreth" must make in "not entangling himself with the affairs of this life." Being educated for the profession of the Law, he devoted himself to it on his return to the South.

In New England, we live for the future, and too readily forget the past. There are some, among the hundreds of our ministry, but comparatively few among the thousands of our membership, who know that there still lingers among us a venerable man, ripe for heaven, who, in the distant day we are reviewing, came, like all the other Methodist evangelists in New England at the time, from a more southern clime, and sharing the untold labors and privations of the period, sustained also its most prominent responsibilities — who, beginning with Fairfield, in the southwest of Connecticut, labored on nearly all the circuits of those early years, until he reached the remote one of Readfield, Maine, — who was the first Presiding Elder on the first District within the latter State, and subsequently sustained the same responsible office on Boston District.

Joshua Taylor, now residing in Cumberland, Maine, was born in Princetown, New Jersey, Feb. 5, 1768. A strictly moral education in his childhood, especially the godly example and instructions of a devoted mother, imparted to his mind an early bias towards religion. "The instructions of my pious mother," he says, "often pressed into my mind, and I would resolve to do better, and, in secret, would kneel down and pray that I might become a Christian; but I felt unwilling that any one should know it, and, in trying to conceal it, lost all my serious impressions, and afterwards became worse than ever. I sometimes wished that my conscience would let me alone until I might become older, and then I would turn and do better; at other times I feared I should go one step too far in the ways of sin, and lose my soul for ever — the thought of which was terrible. But sinful pleasures would again overcome these anxieties, and it is a wonder that I was not left to perish in my sins. O, the infinite mercy and loving kindness of the Lord! as long as I live I would adore the riches of his grace, which has kept me from eternal ruin. When I was between twenty and twenty-one years of age, it pleased God to take from me my mother, by death. The death of my father, which took place about three years before this, made no lasting impression on my mind; but now, finding myself left with four brothers and three sisters, younger than myself, and I not twenty-one years old, the recollection of my mother's conversation and death took fast hold on my heart. I wept, and mourned, and reflected upon the unhappy situation which we eight poor orphans were in, if God should not befriend us, and resolved that, as I was the oldest, I would alter my course of living. But so ignorant was I of the nature of religion, that, at first, I had no thought that any thing more was necessary than to reform in my outward life — and accordingly I renounced whatever I thought to be sinful, and paid strict attention to religious meetings, and to reading the sacred Scriptures, and also attempted to pray in secret. In so doing I was brought, after a few weeks, to see and feel the need of an inward, as well as an outward, renovation. Now trouble and distress rolled in upon me: I found myself to be a sinner, lost and undone — my heart and my life were very wickedness — I found I had a hard, an unbelieving heart, full of pride and all manner of iniquity, and saw that, if I had my just desert, I must be damned for ever. I strove to pray and beg for mercy, and at times hoped that I should obtain it, but, at other times, was almost in despair. In this situation I continued about four months, during which time the devil took every advantage of me, and poured in his fiery darts like a flood — he assailed me with strong temptations to atheism, deism, and fatalism, and with these ideas almost overpowered me ; but when he found he could not fully gain his purpose here, he turned the subject and urged the doctrine of universal salvation, and suggested that I need not give myself any trouble, for all would be well in the end. But this idea was so uncertain that I could not be satisfied with it. I knew I was a sinner, and if there was a God whom I had offended, I had cause to fear and tremble. And then again my old temptations to infidelity would return with great force, and it would be urged there is no God, no Christ, no devil, &c., and if there is, I must be a reprobate, or I had committed the unpardonable sin, and that there was no mercy for me. At times, when I went by myself to pray, it seemed as if the devil was close by me, and it seemed so real that I expected to see him as soon as I should open my eyes after rising from my knees. These agitations were of frequent and long continuance. Again it would be suggested to my mind, that these things which gave me so much trouble, were all delusions, and I need not trouble myself about them. But still my heart remained hard — it seemed as if my convictions were all leaving me, and I should be left to my own destruction. I mourned because I could not mourn aright, and nothing afforded me any encouragement."

In February, 1789, on a Saturday evening, he attended a Methodist prayer-meeting at a private house. He had been deeply distressed, during several days, with religious convictions. "I felt," he says, "that I only grew worse, and must perish in my present condition. The meeting closed, and my heart remained hard. Part of the people withdrew; but a few remained, and I with them. Before leaving the house, some one proposed having prayer again, and whilst the company were singing, light broke into my mind. I had such a discovery of the beauty and excellence of the Savior's character, that I felt to admire and adore, and glory be to his name, I felt that he did have mercy upon me. All his attributes appeared lovely to my soul, and I sunk down into calmness and resignation to his will — so that I went home rejoicing and praising God, and in this sweet frame closed my eyes for sleep. When I awoke the next morning, I was still serene, and through the day I felt that Christ was near me, as my Savior, and beheld such glory and excellence in him, that I could venture myself upon him for time and eternity, and felt willing that he should deal with me as he saw proper. On the evening of that blessed Sabbath, the prayer-meeting was like a heaven to my soul, and the people of God were the excellent of the earth to me. I loved my Savior, I loved his children, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Some months after this happy change, he was induced to exhort in public, and soon the way was opened before him for more important labors. He entered the Itinerant ranks in 1791, and was appointed to Flanders' circuit, N. J.* The next year he entered New England, and labored on Fairfield circuit; during the following four years, he travelled successively, Middletown, Granville, Trenton, N. J., and (the second time) Middletown circuits. In 1797, when the appointments in Maine, which had increased to six circuits, were organized into a District, he was appointed Presiding Elder over them, and will ever hold a prominent place in the annals of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that State, as the *first officer of the kind* who exclusively pertained to it. He continued sole Presiding Elder in Maine, during four years, with such men as Timothy Merrit, Nicholas Snethen, Enoch Mudge, Peter Jane, Joshua Soule, John Broadhead, Daniel Webb, and Epaphras Kibby, under him. Though that was "the day of small things," it was one of great men, in Maine. From Maine, he passed to Boston District, where he continued two years — no very small term of service in the office, for those times; here again he commanded a corps of the "giants in those days;" among them were Joshua Wells, Joshua Soule, Geo. Pickering, Dr. Thos. F. Sargeant, Dr. T. Lyell, &c. In 1803 he was re-appointed to the Maine District, then comprehending eleven circuits — the whole extent of Methodism in the State. The following two years he was stationed at Portland, and in 1806, after fifteen years of indefatigable travels and toils, located — following the almost universal example, perhaps we may say necessity, of married preachers in those days of "much work and little pay." A manuscript sketch of his life has come into our hands, from which we glean the following further references to his appointments. In May, 1791, he was received into the Itinerant ministry at the Conference in Trenton, and was appointed, as we have stated, to Flanders circuit, in the mountainous parts of New Jersey — a section of the State where Jesse Lee himself had first carried the standard of Methodism. In a short time he was removed, for considerations highly honorable to himself, to the adjacent circuit of Newburg, N. Y.

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* The Minutes say Newburg. He was appointed to Flanders, but removed to Newburg a short time, and being on the latter circuit when the Minutes were published, is named in connection with it.

"It was trying to my feelings to be removed so soon," he says, "but from the first, I always determined to be obedient, and if my circuit was not according to my mind, my mind should be according to my circuit — so that there should be harmony in some way. The rides were long on both these circuits, and the labor hard ; but we found kind friends — for the Methodists were a loving people." He was subsequently directed, by his Presiding Elder, to go for a season to Wyoming, on the Susquehannah River, in Pennsylvania, to supply the place of a preacher who had failed in health.

In those early times, even that part of the country was sparsely settled, and he met on his route some of the trying incidents which almost every member of our early ministry had more or less to endure.

" I was informed," he says, " that the ride would be long, and the way difficult, but I started with resolution to go through it by the help of the Lord. The first day's ride brought me to the Delaware River ; after crossing, I inquired for the road to Wyoming. I found it to be chiefly through a wilderness, with a house only once in eight or ten miles, and that about forty or fifty miles would be in this way. The daylight was about leaving me when I got to the first house. On coming to it, I found a number of persons, some of whom, at least, appeared to be much the worse for drinking, but as there was no other house on my way, nearer than eight or ten miles, and night had met me, I could do no better than to tarry. To my sorrow, when the company had chiefly dispersed, I had to take a cold, dirty bed, with a drunken man — and it was difficult to obtain any sleep, for the man of the house and his wife were in a continual quarrel all night, so that I felt as if I was in a den of robbers. Glad was I to see the daylight appear again, and after paying dear for my misfortune, and talking to them about the evil of their conduct, I started for the next house, where I took breakfast and proceeded on my journey. But through divine mercy, I arrived safe at Wyoming, where I travelled and preached about three months."

His next circuit was that of Fairfield, Conn. It extended from Stamford on the south west, to Stratford on the north east, and included several intermediate appointments, and also one in New York. He speaks as follows, of his first New England field of labor:

"I recollect that some of our rides were long and tedious in the winter. But we found kind friends, and in the course of the year had a blessed revival of religion — many were awakened, and a goodly number were converted to the Lord. One instance, which I recorded in my memorandum, I will here state. A Mr. S——, living in Stepney, was friendly to the Methodists until his wife joined our society, but after that he became so enraged that he took an oath that he would disown her if she ever went into a class-meeting again. When I came round again, they were both at meeting. After preaching, I requested the class to stop, as usual; she stopped, but when he perceived it, he came into the room and taking hold of her arm, pulled her out. This act excited much feeling among us; they were not forgotten in our prayers — and as they were going home, the Lord smote him with such keen conviction, that he groaned with anguish. The next time when I came round, I preached at his house, and found him under deep conviction, but strongly tempted to put his horrid oath into execution; and yet he seemed sensible that it would terminate in the ruin of his soul. I reasoned a long time with him, and left him in the hands of the Lord. When I came round again, he professed to have found peace with God, and, after making a very humble confession for what he had said against his wife and us, he joined our society himself. A blessed time of rejoicing was experienced both in his family and in our society."

The Middletown circuit, to which he was appointed in 1793, included the region between the Housatonick and Connecticut rivers, and extended back as far as Waterbury. During this year, he had good opportunities for improvement, and made much proficiency in his studies. "At times," he says, "I felt so happy in my mind that it seemed as if I could step from earth and leap into glory. Here, likewise, the Lord was pleased to give me some souls as seals to my ministry. The glory all be his, for it is all of his rich grace."

In September, 1794, he was at the Wilbraham Conference, and received an appointment to Granville circuit, which lay, partly in Connecticut, but chiefly in Massachusetts. "In travelling on this circuit," he says, "I felt much of the spirit of prayer for the people, and often preached with much freedom, and saw some fruit of my labors. I had, however, some severe trials in my mind this year, but, upon the whole, I think it was a profitable period to me, and I trust, also, to many of the people."

He attended the New London Conference, in the year 1795, and was appointed to Trenton (N. J.) circuit, in order to settle some domestic affairs. In October, 1796, he attended Conference in New York, and was re-appointed to Middletown circuit. "Here, again," he writes, "my heart was well engaged, and I found more of the divine presence and deeper communion with God, than I had ever known before. Oh! the sweet, the powerful seasons with which I was favored — words cannot describe the manifestations of mercy which I experienced. May I never forget this happy year. The circuit was in a good condition."

In September, 1797, he attended Conference at Wilbraham, Massachusetts, "where," he says, "I felt as if I ought to offer myself for the front of the battle, and I volunteered my services for the Province of Maine, (as it was then called,) should it be thought best. Here I was appointed preacher in charge of Readfield circuit, which was then large and laborious — and, also, Presiding Elder of the whole District, which extended east as far as the Penobscot river, and west to the Saco — ground which now includes several districts, and a multitude of circuits. When I heard my appointment read off, my mind seemed to shrink from so weighty a charge, but, nevertheless, I determined to do the best I could. I reached my circuit about the beginning of October, in company with Jesse Stoneman, who had travelled in Maine the preceding year, and was now to form a new circuit, called Norridgewock, on the Kennebec river. Much of the country being newly settled, the roads were very bad; my rides were long, and often, in the log houses, I was much exposed; yet in general, the people where I lodged appeared to do the best they could to make me comfortable. But the greatest difficulty I had to encounter was the hostile spirit which some professors of religion appeared to possess, and the violent opposition we met from many who professed the Calvinistic creed — almost every inch of ground was disputed. Add to this, the fatigues and anxieties of attending the quarterly meetings of the other four circuits, which were far apart — the whole gave me about as heavy a trial as I could struggle under. Yet blesssed be God, he did not suffer me to faint, but often comforted and encouraged me — especially at one of our quarterly meetings, I had such a heavenly baptism as fully compensated me for all I had ever done or suffered in the cause of God. We had some good revivals of religion this year, and found many hearty friends to the cause, who were trying to do all they could for the benefit of souls."

At the Conference of Readfield, Me., 1798, he was continued on the Maine District. It was a year of good results. While traversing the country, a youth about seventeen years of age, who had joined a class some time before, feeling that a dispensation of the gospel was committed unto him, and panting to share the struggles of the flaming Evangelists of Methodism, begged the privilege of accompanying him in his travels, and of aiding him in his preaching. This wish was accorded, and with horse and saddle-bags the young Itinerant commenced a career which has continued to this day, through labors and travels co-extensive with the Republic. He became, afterwards, a distinguished Presiding Elder in Maine, an efficient Agent in our book business, and finally the Senior Bishop of the church. Such was the beginning of the career of Joshua Soule, a son of New England, for whom she still entertains a steadfast interest, notwithstanding the unfortunate differences which, by identifying him with the southern division of the church, have severed him from her ministry.

At the Conference of New York, in 1799, Mr. Taylor was appointed again to Maine. A short visit to his native town called up the memories of the past, and placed them in contrast with the severe privations and trials of his distant field of labor. The temptation was powerful, but the visions of heaven opened above the field of struggle and trial. "Amidst these tender feelings," he writes, "the missionary prize fixed my attention and kept me willing to stand in the front of the battle." He was compelled this year into a printed controversy with a Calvinistic clergyman, in which he did good service to the church. We shall have occasion to refer to it hereafter.

In July, 1800, the Conference was held at Lynn. He was sent back to his old district again, with the addition of another circuit called Bethel, which extended up the Androscoggin river, about as far as there were any inhabitants at the time. He had seen good times among the people, in the formation of this circuit, and in the course of the present year witnessed some blessed revivals in different parts of the State.

While travelling this district, he attempted to introduce Methodism into Castine, but was repelled with great tumult. A prosperous society had been formed in Penobscot, and a few individuals were in the habit of coming on the Sabbath, from Castine, to share its spiritual privileges. Among them was a Mr. Freeman, who invited Mr. Taylor to Castine, assuring him that the people would be pleased to hear him.

"The appointment having been made," writes Mr. Taylor, "I rode down to Esquire Freeman's in the forenoon, and was politely received and entertained. In the afternoon I told my host that I should like to call on their minister with him; I accordingly did, and was treated by Mr. Mason, the minister, with as much respect and kindness as I could desire; for although we could not agree in sentiment, on many points, there did not appear to be any bad feelings on either side. He invited me to remain and take tea with him. I informed him that I would, provided he would go with me to the meeting in the evening, to which he agreed. In due time, we went to Esquire Freeman's, which was on our way to the court-house, where the meeting was to be held. After being at Mr. Freeman's for some time, he told me that he doubted whether it would be proper for me to attempt to preach, for he had been informed there would be disturbance. I replied, that as the appointment had been made, I could not shrink from it, and requested that he and Mr. Mason would accompany me, which they did. We found a number of people at the court-house. The service began at the time appointed, but shortly afterwards a noise commenced without, and continued to such a degree that I found it difficult to make the people hear me. I felt that I was on Satan's ground, but knew my Master had a superior claim, and was not afraid to assert his right. When the meeting closed, I was apprehensive that some of the rabble would lay wicked hands upon me, as I was informed that many of them were armed with clubs. I determined that if any thing unpleasant took place, their minister should witness it. When he walked down the stairs I kept by his side, and when we came to the door the passage was opened before us. We passed on undisturbed, to the end of the ranks. They immediately closed in, and followed us with their music to Esquire Freeman's, and after I got into the house they dispersed. It was not long, however, before a message came to Mr. Freeman, that if I was not sent out of town, they would attack his house and give me a coat of tar and feathers. He told me that I had better go as far as Mr. Wilson's, (a good Methodist brother,) in Penobscot. I replied, that I did not think there would be any difficulty if I remained with him; but he said he was told that some of them had been drinking very freely, and it was likely they would do mischief. To satisfy him, I told him that if he would have my horse saddled, &c., I would do as he wished. It was moonlight, and I arrived at brother Wilson's very comfortably, where I had to tell my pitiful story. This affair excited much feeling and talk for a considerable distance around. I was informed that some of the people in Penobscot said that if they ever served a Methodist preacher so again, they would go down upon them in a body and drive them into the river. Dr. Mann, a very respectable physician, who lived in Castine, informed me that it was said to him, I should never preach in Castine again. He informed my antagonist that *he* would invite me to preach at his house, and if any one molested me, he 'would put the day-light through him.' The doctor actually invited me to preach at his house; but as I was informed that his wife felt very uneasy, and feared that if I came, mischief would be done, I told him I thought it not best to attempt it, under the circumstances, and there it ended at that time. The doctor, I believe, approved of the Methodist doctrines, and had, I suppose, about religion enough to fight for them; but I have been recently informed that he afterwards became a lively, active Methodist — a very useful member, and finally died in peace. I learn that there is now a good society of Methodists in Castine, with a decent house of worship, and favorable prospects. *The* LORD GOD *Omnipotent reigneth.*"

He subsequently superintended the Boston District, but at the Boston Conference, in 1803, the Bishop was embarrassed to find laborers for Maine. Mr. Taylor volunteered his services again, and, in the name of the Lord, re-entered that State; many souls were awakened and converted, and he enjoyed among the young and poor societies of his extensive District, "many happy days and months." On his way to the General Conference, he passed through Portland, and was instrumental in providing the first Methodist chapel of that city, as will be seen in its history.

He was afterwards appointed to Portland, commencing his labors with but eleven members, all of whom, except two, were females, and "trusting in the Lord for his support and success." He had the happiness of laying there, securely, the foundation of the church, and has since had the pleasure of seeing two successful societies, with about five hundred members, established on the basis, which, under God, was prepared by his laborious and faithful exertions; while more than twenty thousand Methodists have been raised up in the State, and thousands after thousands have gone from it to the church triumphant.

After laboring two years in Portland with much success, he was compelled, by his health and domestic circumstances, to locate. He has subsequently labored very usefully in Portland and vicinity, particularly Cumberland and Falmouth. He yet lives, but age and grace have placed him above flattery; we know not how to withhold the warm-hearted tribute of one, who, in youth, "did good battle" under his guidance, but who now, like him, worn out with years, sits at the door of his tent, waiting the summons for his last march — the march into heaven. There is an affecting significance in the use of the past tense which seems so natural to these noble men of a former generation, when they speak of each other. "Joshua Taylor," says our venerable correspondent, "was as worthy of remark as many who have not his extreme modesty. He was small in stature, and of a clear, methodical and orderly mind. His labors were extensive and useful. He filled many important appointments in towns, Circuits and Districts. He faithfully propagated, and carefully guarded primitive Methodism through evil and good report. He might have had his choice of many places to settle in, could he have been prevailed upon to take charge of a Parish. He was a most delightful companion. The man that did not grow better by the company of Joshua Taylor, must have neglected a rare privilege. I never knew malice to touch his character. I dare not indulge my feelings or expressions — he is yet alive. In the closet, in the grove, by the road-side, and in public, I have witnessed his devotions." *

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* Letter from Rev. E. Mudge.

Of Smith Weeks, Mr. Taylor's colleague on Fairfield circuit, we know nothing more than the record of his appointments in the Minutes. He commenced his ministry on Fairfield circuit, the present year. During the ensuing four years he travelled in the State of New York, on Newburg, New River, (where he spent two years,) and Cambridge circuits. In 1796, he returned to New England and labored on Chesterfield circuit, N. H. The following year he was at Provincetown, and in 1789, located.

Philip Wager joined the Itinerancy in 1790, and continued to travel for eight years, when he is supposed to have located.* During his short ministry, his labors and travels were extensive. From 1790 to 1798, he was successively on the Cambridge, N. Y., Otsego, N. Y., Warren, R. I., Readfield, Me., Portland, Me., Chesterfield, N. H., and Duchess, N. Y., circuits.

James Coleman, his colleague, was born in Black River township, N. J., October 30, 1766. In 1777 he removed with his parents beyond the Alleghanies, and settled on the Monongahela river. This was then a remote region, quite out of the reach of the religious provisions of the times. Young Coleman grew up, therefore, in ignorance and sin. According to his own statements, his religious knowledge was exceedingly deficient, consisting in little more than some general ideas of the Providence of God and the doctrine of Predestination, derived from his parents, who had been members of the Presbyterian church. Towards the close of the Revolutionary war, the indefatigable Itinerants of Methodism penetrated to that frontier and proclaimed the word of life among its new settlements. Young Coleman heard them, was awakened and converted, but through persecutions and the lack of more regular means of grace, he lost "his first love."

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* Dr. Bangs' Alphabetical Catalogue. The *Minutes* give no intelligence of his fate, after 1797.

Anxious for something to appease his conscience, he seized the doctrine of Predestination, and comforted himself with the persuasion that he was one of God's elect, and therefore secure, whatever might be the moral character of his life; the result was, increased carelessness, and, at last, habits of dissipation. God had, however, an important work for him, and did not abandon him utterly; he was afflicted with dangerous illness — sought the Lord again, and soon afterwards joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was licensed as an Exhorter, and felt that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him. About this time he was drafted to serve in a war with the Indians, but believing that he was called to a higher warfare, he refused to comply, and meantime, was licensed to preach. On informing the captain of his determination, he was told that "he might go and preach in the army;" subsequently, an officer and several men, were sent to seize him. They found him preaching, and God so affected their hearts that they left him without further molestation.

In 1791 he joined the Itinerant ranks, and was appointed colleague of Daniel Triden, on Redstone circuit.* The next year he came to New England, and travelled Litchfield circuit. In 1793 he labored on Fairfield circuit. The next year he passed, with one of those transitions which were characteristic of the Itinerancy at that date, to Upper Canada, where he travelled one of the only two circuits yet formed in that Province. His labors, privations and perils, there, were such as fell to the lot of but few, even of the Itinerants of that day. He continued in the new and laborious field of

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* Not "Ohio," as the Obituary in the Minutes of 1841–2 state.

Canada, till 1800, assisting, amidst great trials and glorious revivals, Dunham, Woolsey, Woorster, Coate and others, in laying the foundations of Methodism there. In the latter year he returned to New England and labored on Middletown circuit. He subsequently travelled Fletcher, Vt., Redding, Conn., Duchess, N. Y., New Rochelle, N. Y., Long Island, Croton, N. Y., Newburg, N. Y., and New Windsor, N. Y., circuits, till 1810, when he was returned supernumerary. But the next year he re-entered the effective service, and was appointed to Litchfield circuit, Conn., which he travelled during two years, and then passed to Stratford, Conn. In 1814 his name was entered on the "superannuated" list of the New York Conference, where it continued until 1821, when he again travelled Stratford circuit. The next year he is among the "supernumeraries," but had charge of Ridgefield circuit, Conn. In the following year he entered the lists of the "superannuated, or worn-out" laborers, and continued there the remainder of his life, which terminated at Ridgefield, Fairfield county, Connecticut, on the 5th day of February, 1842, in the 77th year of his age. His labors were extensive and successful. On his route to, and amidst his travels in Canada, he surmounted the severest privations. "Once, while passing up the Mohawk river in company with two others, he was obliged to go on shore fifteen nights in succession, and kindle a fire to keep off the wild beasts; and food failing, he was reduced to a single cracker per day. Yet such was his zeal for the glory of God, and such his love for the souls of men, that no privations or difficulties could arrest him or even damp his ardor. Though his abilities were not great, and his acquirements but limited, yet such was the peculiar conviction that attended his prayers, so entirely was he a man of one aim and one business, so strong was his faith and so tender his love, that no inconsiderable success attended his efforts, and it is confidently believed that the crown upon his head will not be without many stars, and some, too, of the first magnitude."* Mr. Coleman was marked by the Christian amenity of his manners. His life was an exemplification of his preaching —his death peaceful and triumphant.

RICHARD SWAIN was a native of New Jersey, and commenced his Itinerant labors in 1789, on Trenton circuit, in that State. The ensuing two years he spent on Flanders circuit, and in 1792 entered New England and joined Mr. Coleman on Middletown circuit. The next year he was appointed to New London circuit, as colleague of George Roberts. The following ten years he spent in various appointments in New Jersey, "travelling in the extreme parts of the work, before things were ready to his hands, and bearing a part of the burden and heat of the day."† In 1804, he was reported among the "supernumeraries," and continued in that relation till his death, in 1808. He possessed quick and substantial powers of mind, and was somewhat addicted to sallies of wit, especially in conversation—sharing, in this respect, a very common, though ambiguous ability, of his contemporaries in the Itinerancy—the result, perhaps, of their intimate familiarity with human nature, and the variety of rencounters with it which their travels rendered unavoidable. In the last years of his life, Mr. Swain endured severe afflictions; for nearly five years he lingered in a condition which measurably, and at times entirely cut off his labors in the church. His sufferings were, however, a refining fire, and terminated in a triumphant death. "He departed," says his fellow laborers, "in confident peace, triumphant faith, and the smiles of a present God." ‡

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* Minutes of 1841-2.

† Minutes of 1808.

‡ Ibid.

HOPE HULL was admitted to the travelling ministry in 1785. His Itinerant career was limited to ten years, and, except the short interval he spent in New England, was devoted to the introduction and propagation of Methodism in North Carolina and Georgia, where, till his day, it had made but slight incursions. His first circuit was Salisbury, N. C. In 1786, he travelled Pedee, N. C., and in 1787 Amelia circuits. In 1788 he penetrated still further South, and entering Georgia, labored on Washington circuit; the following year he was on Burke circuit, in the same State. In 1790 he attempted to introduce Methodism into Savannah; he preached in a Mechanic's shop for some time, but, notwithstanding his rare eloquence, was violently persecuted and perilled by the tumults of the mob. The success of the attempt was too small to justify its continuance; he returned, therefore, to Burke circuit. He labored there one year, and then started with Bishop Asbury for New England, where he travelled extensively along the Connecticut river. His stay in the East was short, but produced a wide and deep impression. His talents were of a high order. Thomas Ware places him prominently in "the number of those eminent men who had been employed in this section of the work, and whose memory was precious to many." He says, "he was often spoken of in terms of great respect and tenderness."

"I knew Mr. Hull," continues that venerable man, "and almost envied him his talents. I thought, indeed, if I possessed his qualifications I could be instrumental in saving thousands, where, with my own, I could gain one. This extraordinary young man drew multitudes after him, who, disarmed of their prejudices, were, under the influence of his discourses, like clay in the hand of the potter. It seemed that he could do with them just as he pleased. And yet, in the midst of this astonishing influence and career of usefulness, he sighed for a southern clime; and at his own request he was permitted to retire to another portion of the field. Perhaps it was best, lest, if he had remained, he might have been idolized by the devoted people among whom he labored, to his own injury and theirs. A man of some distinction represented him as a skilful musician, who could excite any passion he pleased. "In our part," said he, in speaking of Mr. Hull, "Arminians were deemed guilty of abominable heresy, and our minister had often denounced them and consigned them to certain perdition. But Mr. Hull came to a neighboring town; an influential individual invited him to ours, and informed our minister that, if he refused him the meeting-house, he should preach in his house. The meeting-house was opened, and it was crowded to overflowing. Our minister was present, and was the first who began to weep. "My eyes," said the man, "were alternately on the minister in the pulpit and the one in the pew; and I was surprised to see how soon and how completely the latter was unmanned. Mr. Hull, it is true, soon left us; but, by his unequalled power to move the feelings of the people, he so far secured their attention as to commend to their understanding and hearts the gospel he preached, and Arminians have since been permitted to live among us. From that time to the day of his death, our minister was never heard to say a word against them."

Such was Hope Hull. He returned to the South in 1793, and was designated to Savannah, Georgia. In the Minutes of the following year, we have no notice of his appointment, and in 1795 he is returned as located. His disappearance, for whatever cause, from among the noble names of that period of our history, impresses us as the loss of the missing Pleiad from its constellation. We know not the circumstances which occasioned his location, but suppose they were the usual ones of the times, domestic necessities or physical disabilities. We trust this radiant star, whose obscuration was the eclipse of a bright hope of the church, will be found hereafter in still greater brightness near the great central light, in the midst of his old associates.*

FREDUS ALDRIDGE was also from the region of the Baltimore Conference — a Conference to which New England owes most of her first and noblest Methodist laborers. He commenced his Itinerant ministry on Dover circuit, Del., in 1790; the next year passed to Talbot circuit, Md., and in 1792 was associated with Roberts and Hull, on Hartford

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* We learn that Mr Hull died in full hope of immortality, in Athens, Georgia.

Circuit. The following year he was the colleague of Swain and Roberts on New London circuit. In 1794 he was on Litchfield Circuit, under the Presiding Eldership of his friend Roberts. In 1795 he returned to Delaware and labored at Wilmington; the following year he was again in Maryland, travelling Cecil Circuit, and in 1797 he was among those who were "under a location, through weakness of body or family concerns."

DAVID KENDALL'S ministerial career was short,* it commenced in 1788 on New City (N. Y.) circuit. The following three years, he travelled respectively Lake Champlain, Long Island, and Saratoga Circuits. In 1792, he entered New England and labored on Pittsfield Circuit, the next year he was the colleague of Enoch Mudge on Greenwich Circuit, R. I. In 1794 he was supernumerary in New York city, and in the following year located.

ROBERT DILLON entered the "Travelling Connection" in 1791, and was appointed to New Briton, N. Y. The next year he came to New England, and travelled Pittsfield Circuit. We fail to trace him in the year 1793, but he reappears in the Minutes of 1794 and continues through a series of laborious appointments, in the state of New York, down to the year 1811, when he also falls into the ranks of the "located," after an indefatigable ministry of twenty years.

JORDAN REXFORD entered the Itinerancy in 1792. His first appointment was to Pittsfield, Mass. Thence he passed to Lynn, in 1793, and the next year was at Marblehead. He was "to change," however, "in three months, with John Hill," whose field this year has the comprehensive title of "New Hampshire." Mr. Rexford's labors in Marblehead, were difficult and attended by severe trials. On his first appointment to that town he was snow-balled through the streets. He married one of the original members of the society, and for three years disappears from the roll of his brethren; but in 1798 joined them again, and is appointed to Bristol, R. I. The next year he labored on the Island of Nantucket; the year following on Bristol and Portsmouth Circuit, as colleague of the venerable Daniel Webb; the two ensuing years at Portsmouth, and in 1814 he located. He resided several years at Marblehead, a local preacher and teacher of the "Upper Town school."

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* His name does not appear in Dr. Bangs' Alphabetical Catalogue.

Mr. Lee, as we have seen, was appointed this year Presiding Elder over a District that included Eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and the principal points of which were Lynn, Boston, Needham and Providence. The General Conference was to convene on the first of the ensuing November, in Baltimore. But a brief interval of time remained therefore, before it would be necessary for him to depart on his journey thither. He projected, however, a tour to Rhode Island, to attend to the further organization of the New Providence Circuit, which he had surveyed in his previous visit, and to which, as we have noticed, a preacher was assigned at the Conference of this year. In a few days after the adjournment of that body he was on his way thither. The particulars of this excursion we have not learned, further than that he visited Providence, Pawtuxet, Warren and Bristol, preaching and travelling continually, putting in train the labors of the Circuit for the newly arrived laborer and re-entering Massachusetts after about one week's absence. On his return he preached at Taunton and Easton. At the latter place it appears that a society had been already formed. On Saturday, Aug. 18, he thus writes:

"I rode to brother Stokes', in Easton, and met the class at 5 o'clock. When I consider the goodness of God to me in this journey, I am con-

> strained to call upon my soul to bless his holy name. I have found delight in the service of God, and comfort among the people. I have had an opportunity of preaching to many who never heard a Methodist before."

On the 20th, he was in Boston with his friend and co-laborer Jordan Corsden, and at night, met the little class "which," he writes, "has been lately formed." The next month he spent mostly in Lynn. He says:

> "Tuesday, 10th of September. I met the class at Wood End at 3 o'clock; the Lord was with us of a truth; one woman said that the Lord had converted her soul a few nights before, and she spoke of it with much confidence and tenderness, so that many were melted into tears. O God! let all the people praise thee.
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> "Monday, 1st of October. I visited several friends in Lynn, and at night, I preached my farewell sermon, on Phil. 1: 27; *Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, and that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind.* The Lord was with us of a truth; there was great weeping among the people, both men and women. I felt very sorry to leave them, and they seemed to be sorry to part with me, as I expected to go home, and to be absent from them for the space of four months. But the will of the Lord be done.
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> "Tuesday, 2d. I left Lynn, with a good deal of sorrow, and set on my journey."

He spent at the General Conference, and in a visit to his paternal home, about five months. On the 20th of February, 1793, he re-entered Boston with horse and saddle-bags, after the fashion of the primitive Methodist Itinerancy. He arrived after dark, much fatigued, "and with wet feet," from the wintery slush of the roads. His recollections of Boston could not be the most cheering, but he now found there a warm welcome, and "was comforted," he says, "with the Boston class, which met soon after I got at Mr. Burrell's." The next day he hastened with a glad heart to his "old friends" at Lynn, feeling "thankful to God for bringing him back again," and still more thankful to find "that religion had revived amongst the people" in his absence.

On the next Sabbath (24th) he preached to them in their yet unfinished house from II Sam. 20 : 9 : *Art thou in health, my brother !* " It was a good time," he says, " to the people, and profitable to myself. We then administered the sacrament, and three grown persons were baptized, and several added to the church."

He continued about three weeks in Lynn and its vicinity, but as it was supplied by the services of Mr. Rainor, he departed on the 18th of March on another excursion. He says,

> "I set off on my tour to Rhode Island and Connecticut States. I rode to Boston, and at night, preached on Gal. 3: 11. I found satisfaction in preaching, and the people were quite attentive. Then brother E. Cooper exhorted, and his words seemed to have much weight with the hearers."

During this tour, he visited Easton, Pawtuxet, Warwick, Greenwich, Weckford, Charlestown, New London ; thence he journeyed to Gen. Lippet's, in Cranston, to Providence, Needham, and on to Boston ; after which he returned to Lynn.

On the 30th of April he was at Marblehead and gives an intimation of the humble, but to him encouraging prospects of its infant society. He writes —

> " At night, I preached on Lam. 3: 36: *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* The people had been at the trouble to hire an upper room of Mr. Bowler, for 15 dollars per year, and to fix a number of seats in it for the use of the Methodists, which is more respect than they ever showed us before. To-night we met in it for the first time, and the Lord owned our meeting, and his presence was felt amongst us. I found great liberty in teaching them the way to heaven; and felt more encouraged about the place and people then I used to be."

He continued to travel and preach almost daily, until the Conference of the 1st of August ensuing, confining himself, however, (if indeed it can be called confinement,) mostly to Boston, Lynn, Marblehead and Salem. Lynn was his favorite resort, " being," says his biographer, " more attached to it than to any other place within the bounds of his District."

On the 21st of July, the apostolic Asbury again entered New England on his way to the second Lynn Conference. He was weary, and had been sick nearly four months, but pressed onward, attending to his responsible business and, travelling during these four month, of illness about three thousands miles.* He briefly sketches his journey to Lynn in the following notes.

Monday 21. We rode fifteen miles to Sharon, two miles from Litchfield. There is a little move among the people of this place.

Tuesday 22. Came to H———'s. I rested in a very solitary shade, and was comforted in my own mind. Perhaps the old man is right who says, not many of this generation will enter into the promised land, but their children. Came to East Hartford, and find it still a day of small things. Falling under deep dejection (such as I had not known for months,) I concluded to preach this evening for my own consolation, on "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" We passed through and spent a night at Windham — a pleasant town. Thence through Canterbury and Plainfield: where our preachers from Connecticut have visited — but it is a dry land — little rain in a double sense. Thence I came upon the State of Rhode Island; stopped in Coventry, and found that the two preachers stationed here have been running over almost the whole State, and had formed but few societies. When I came to Providence, I. Martin told me, that under the present difficulties they had agreed not to forward the preachers of the Methodists among them, not to befriend them; I asked for a tavern, and was directed to General T.'s, where I was used well: some were displeased at our praying; and acted much like Sodomites. Oh! the enmity and wickedness that is in the human heart. We had heavy work for man and horse to reach Easton — our money grew short.

Sunday 27. Reading the Scripture in the congregation appeared to be a new thing among the people. I gave them a lecture under the apple trees, on Isaiah 35: 3–6; and trust my labor was not lost.

Monday 28. We rode upwards of thirty miles, through great heat, to Lynn. On our way we fed our horses, and bought a cake and some cheese for ourselves; surely we are a spectacle to men and angels! The last nine days, we have rode upwards of two hundred miles, and, all things taken together, I think it worse than the wilderness: the country abounds with rocks, hills, and stones; and the heat is intense — such as is seldom known in these parts.

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* Journals, Anno 1793.

Though wearied and feeble he thought not of repose; the next day he ascended the pulpit and proclaimed, "Hear ye me Asa, and all Juda, and Benjamin; The lord is with you, while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you" — 2 Chron. 15: 2.

The ecclesiastical year closed, August 1793, with cheering indications of progress. The returns in the minutes exhibit an advance in the membership of more than one fourth on the number of the preceding year. In the latter it amounted to 1358, in the present minutes, to 1739. Four years had not yet elapsed since the formation of the first society at Stratfield; the numerical gain of the infant church, thus far, had been at the average rate of at least 435 per year, no small growth under the inauspicious circumstances of the times. All the circuits report an increase, except Litchfield, which descends from 428 (the number of the preceding year) to 184. This circuit, it must be remembered, extended into New York, and the apparent diminution may be owing to the incorporation of its Western appointments into new circuits. Lynn returned 166, a gain of nearly 50 on the prior year; Needham, 50, a gain of 16; Middletown, 172, a gain of nearly 50; Hartford, 331, a gain of 146; Pittsfield, 330, a gain of more than 100; Boston, reluctant Boston, returns 41, a gain of 26. Four circuits bearing New England names, make returns for the first time this year; they are New London, which reports 50 members; Warren, R. I., 58; Greenwich, R. I., 16, and Granville, Mass., 90. The returns from Rhode Island were the first yet reported from that State — they amounted to but 74.

There had been an extensive outspread of Methodism through Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts;

in the latter, even the stronghold of the Metropolis had yielded to the indomitable zeal of Lee, and its little band of two score members were already projecting the erection of a chapel. A considerable revival had prevailed during the year at Lynn, resulting, as we have seen, in an addition of nearly 50 to the society. The Hartford and Middletown Circuits had received gracious visitations of the Spirit and numerous additions to their membership; they had lately gathered into their humble communion nearly 200 souls; the purifying fires, kindled along the banks of the Connecticut the previous year, by the instrumentality of Lemuel Smith and Menzies Rainor, had extended and heightened during the present one under the faithful labors of the eloquent Hope Hull and his colleagues, Roberts and Aldridge. Asbury supposed that more than 300 souls had been awakened, and more than 200 converted on the Hartford Circuit since the last Conference.* Meanwhile the Western Circuits on the Albany District shared the blessed visitation; the untiring evangelists who travelled them were cheered by the triumphs of the truth, and displays of the divine power in the conviction and conversion of scores of their hearers; on the Pittsfield Circuit, alone, more than a hundred were enrolled among the struggling, but conquering host of the new "sect every where spoken against." A consciousness of the security and prospective success of their cause had spread through all their ranks, and while the violent and prejudiced began to deem it time for hostilities, the disinterested and devout, began to open their hearts and their houses, to welcome the Itinerant evangelists as the "blessed" who "came in the name of the Lord," the men who "show the way of salvation."

Not only had their numbers augmented, but the field of travel and labor was extended in every direction. The number of circuits and stations had increased from 9 to 14, and the large minded Lee began to cast his eye abroad for a new and more distant arena. He went to the Conference, determined to offer himself as a Missionary to the "*Province of Maine*," then a remote wilderness. Thither we shall follow him in our next chapter, to witness continued exhibitions of the moral heroism of his character, while braving the inclemencies and perils of a new country, and achieving the sublime task of founding a religious organization, which was to scatter, in about half a century, more than three hundred and fifty travelling and local preachers among its rising villages and cities, and embody in them more than twenty thousand members.

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* **Asbury's Journals, Anno 1793.**

# CHAPTER X.

## ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1793-4.

Conference at Lynn — At Tolland — Asbury leaves New England — Appointments for the year — Sketches of Ezekiel Cooper — Enoch Mudge — New London Circuit — Methodism in Maine — Trials.

On the first day of August, 1793, the Conference convened at Lynn. The preachers of the Circuits in western New England were not present, as a seperate session had been appointed for their convenience at Tolland, Conn., to be held in about a week after the one at Lynn.*

We have but little information respecting this Conference. Eight preachers were in attendance.† Asbury remarks, "We have only about three hundred members in the District; yet we have a call for seven or eight Preachers: although our members are few, our hearers are many."

The business of the session closed on Saturday. The next day four sermons were delivered in the new chapel, beginning at six o'clock in the morning. The little band of Itinerants partook of the Lord's Supper with the disciples at Lynn, and on Monday morning dispersed to their various fields to suffer, labor and triumph another year. They had refreshed themselves by the hospitality of the young and prosperous church of Lynn, by the interchange of their ministerial sympathies, and by united invocations of the blessing of God on their common work; but a cloud had hung over their small assembly, and their hearts had been touched, though not unprofitably, by deep sorrow. The news of the O'-Kelly schism in the South reached them; nearly 25 preachers, in various parts of the connection, had ceased to travel; four of them had withdrawn, and among these was their own Boanerges. John Allen had laid down his Sinai-trumphet to take it up no more. Other causes of grief added to the bitterness of these, and the sick and wayworn Asbury resumes his travels, remarking, that "circumstances had occurred which made this Conference more painful than any one Conference beside."

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* Minutes, 1792. † Memoirs of Lee, Chap. XIII.

But "no man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God;" these men so believed, and they believed also that "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." They addressed themselves therefore, with renewed zeal to their toils and sufferings, and none more so than the great and good Asbury. "Surely," said he, "as he approached the Conference, "we are a spectacle for men and angels;" under still severer sufferings he now mounted his horse and set his face towards the West. He passed a few hours at Waltham, in the homestead of the venerable Pickering, so well known among us, from that day to this, for its sanctified hospitalities to the weary Itinerant. Here he preached to a large assembly, and was cheered to find a deep interest among the people. "Several souls," he writes, "are under awakenings, and there is hope the Lord will work. The harvest is great; the living faithful; laborers are few."

His physical sufferings increased, but he pressed forward.

On Monday, 11th, the Conference met in Tolland, Conn.* This town was about the centre of the region included in what was the Tolland Circuit of that period.† It was previously connected with the Hartford Circuit, and the great reformation which had extended like fire in stubble through the latter, under the labors of Hope Hull, George Roberts, Lemuel Smith and their colleagues, the preceding two years, had left distinct traces in Tolland. A small society had been formed, and a chapel erected, on the estate of an excellent townsman, Mr. Howard, who befriended the infant church, and most of whose family were made partakers of the grace of life through its instrumentality.‡ It was in this chapel, then but partially finished, that the Conference assembled. Most of the preachers, ten or twelve in number, were entertained at Mr. Howard's hospitable mansion. Asbury addressed them from II. Tim., 2: 24–26: *The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.* "Lame as I was," he writes, "I went through the business — I was tired out with labor, heat, pain, and company." Yet he departed the same day: "Being unable to ride on horseback, I drove on in a carriage through the rain, over the rocks, in the dark, and came to

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* Asbury's Journals. The Minutes say the 12th, but the time was often anticipated or delayed in those early days.

† Letter of Mr. Joseph Howard, of Tolland, to the Writer.

‡ Our venerable correspondent just referred to, is one of his sons; two other sons had to endure rather severely the force of the "*principles*" of those times, for their obstinate attachment to Metohdism; they were carried, together with Abel Bliss Esq., of Wilbraham, to Northampton jail for resisting oppressive taxations for the support of the Congregational church.

Doctor Steel's, at Ellington. I am now not able to move from my horse to a house." Unable to ride his horse he still journeyed onward.

> "I came in brother S.'s carriage to Hartford. From what we can gather, we are encouraged to hope that upwards of three hundred souls have been awakened; and more than two hundred converted to God, the last year. If this work goes on, Satan will be laboring by all means, and by every instrument."

From Middletown he passed to New Haven, thence to Derby, "with a return of inflammation in the throat," thence to West Haven, "very unwell," thence he "had heavy work to get to Redding, being lame in both feet." On his way to the latter place he was compelled to "*lay down on the roadside*." "I felt," he says, "like Jonah or Elijah. I took to my bed at Redding." The bed, however, was no congenial place for such a man. On the 18th we find him riding "ten miles on horseback, and thirteen in a carriage," to Bedford, where he "rested a day at dear widow Banks', where I was at home." Well does he exclaim there, "O, how sweet is one day's rest!" On the 20th he left New England, "riding thirty-three miles" on horse-back. "On the route my horse started," he says, "and threw me into a mill-race, knee deep in water, my hands and side in the dirt; my shoulder was hurt by the fall. I stopped at a house, shifted my clothes, and prayed with the people. If any of these people are awakened by my stopping there, all will be well." Such was Asbury, and such his early toils and sufferings in New England. He belongs to our history as well as to that of every other portion of the church, and the personal incidents of his official visitations to the East are no insignificant illustrations of the times and the man.

The Lynn and Tolland Conferences formed the following plans of labor for the ensuing year:

Ezekiel Cooper, *Elder; Boston,* Amos G. Thompson;

*Needham*, John Hill; *Lynn*, Jordan Rexford; *Greenwich*, David Kendall, Enoch Mudge; *Warren*, Philip Wager; *Province of Maine* and *Lynn*, Jesse Lee.

George Roberts, *Elder; Hartford*, George Pickering, Joshua Hall; *New London*, G. Roberts, R. Swain, F. Aldridge; *Middletown*, Joshua Taylor, Benjamin Fidler; *Litchfield*, Lemuel Smith, Daniel Ostrander; *Tolland*, Joseph Lovel. Besides these, there were three New England circuits within the *Albany District*, under the Presiding Eldership of Thomas Ware, viz: *Granville*, Hezekiah Woorster and Jason Perkins; *Pittsfield*, James Covel and Zadok Priest; and *Fairfield*, Aaron Hunt and James Coleman. The Itinerant field in New England comprehended, then, the present year, *two* Districts and part of a third, *fourteen* Circuits and stations, and *twenty-five* laborers.

Eminent names distinguish this brief list. The veteran who heads it, EZEKIEL COOPER, lived until the present year, having the peculiar and signal distinction of being the *oldest member of any Methodist Conference in the new hemisphere*, and only one survived in the old world who had preceded him.* Ezekiel Cooper was born in Caroline Co., Md., February 22d, 1673. His father was an officer in the Revolutionary army. When Ezekiel was about fourteen years of age, Rev. Freeborn Garrettson came into the neighborhood, and proposed to preach. The soldiers were at that time upon duty; they were drawn up in front of the house, formed into a hollow square, while Garrettson stood in the centre and preached. During his sermon his attention was attracted by the thoughtful aspect of a boy, leaning upon a gate, and apparently absorbed in listening to the discourse. That boy became the distinguished Cooper.

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* Matthew Lumb, the oldest Wesleyan preacher of England, entered the Itinerant Ministry two years before Mr. Cooper. He died soon after Mr. Cooper's decease.

He commenced his Itinerant ministry in 1785, on Long Island Circuit. In 1786 he travelled East Jersey Circuit. There were then but ten Methodist preachers in the entire State, and only about twelve hundred members, but when he died, New Jersey had become an Annual Conference, with one hundred and forty preachers, and more than thirty thousand members. After 1785, Mr. Cooper travelled successively Trenton, N. J., Baltimore, Annapolis, Md., (two years,) and Alexandria, D. C., circuits. We miss him in the Minutes of 1792, but in 1793 he re-appears in them as Presiding Elder, Boston District. He was appointed to this District in August, but arrived in New England at least four months before, as Lee records in his Journal, that, on the 18th of March, after he had preached in Boston, "Bro. E. Cooper exhorted, and his words seemed to have much weight with the hearers."* His District comprehended the whole Methodist field in the eastern portion of New England, taking in the Province of Maine, and extending to the mouth of the Providence River. His labors are gratefully remembered by many of our oldest members. His word was in great power, and often characterized by profound theological exposition — such as interested New England taste, by its metaphysical acumen, while it smote the conscience by its hortative force. On leaving the East, Mr. Cooper labored at Brooklyn and New York, with the veteran Lawrence McCoombs, an early and laborious preacher in New England, and subsequently, till his death, the coadjutor of Mr. Cooper in the Philadelphia Conference.

He spent four years in Philadelphia and Wilmington, two at each respectively, and in 1799 took charge of the Book business of the church, as "Editor and General Agent." His abilities for this office were soon shown to be of the highest order; he gave to our "Book concern" that impulse and organization which subsequently rendered it the largest publishing establishment in the New World. After managing its interests with admirable success for six years, during which its capital stock had risen from almost nothing to 45,000 dollars, he resumed his Itinerant labors and continued them in Brooklyn, New York city, Wilmington, Del., Baltimore, &c., for eight years, when he located. He remained in the latter relation during eight years, when he re-entered the effective ranks, but was soon afterwards placed on the supernumerary list in the Philadelphia Conference. He continued, however, for many years to perform extensive service, traversing many Circuits, visiting the churches, and part of the time superintending a District. During the latter years of his life he resided in Philadelphia, illustrating, in a hoary age, the gospel which he preached with such pre-eminent ability in the years of his vigor.

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* Memoirs, Chap. xii.

Mr. Cooper's personal appearance embodied the finest idea of age, intelligence and piety, combined. His frame was tall and slight, his locks white with years, his forehead high and prominent, and his features expressive at once of benignity, subtlety and serenity. A wen had been enlarging on his neck from his childhood, but without detracting from the peculiarly elevated and characteristic expression of his face. He was considered by his ministerial associates, a "living Encyclopædia," in respect not only to theology, but most other departments of knowledge, and his large and accurate information was only surpassed by the range and soundness of his judgment. He sustained a prominent position in the annals of the church, during both its adversity and its prosperity; the delineation of his remarkable character should devolve upon an able hand, and will form an important feature in the history of our cause.

A correspondent, who had the mournful satisfaction of following him to the grave, writes as follows, of his latter years and death.

> "After becoming superannuated, he labored extensively in the work, preaching at camp-meetings, quarterly-meetings, and other occasions, with great power and success. He continued to preach occasionally, till near the close of life, with general acceptability and profit to the people. His sickness was rather short than otherwise, nor could I learn that his sufferings were very severe. When asked, respecting his state of mind, he invariable answered, 'calm and peaceful.' On one occasion, after having been engaged in prayer some time, he broke out in praise, and shouted aloud, 'Hallelujah! hallelujah!' for about a dozen times. On a subsequent occasion, his joy was greatly extatic, and he praised God aloud. For a few days before he died, he said little, but was calm and peaceful, till on Sunday, the 21st of February, 1847, the weary wheels of life stood still at last, and he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. He was a man of respectable connections, a mind disciplined in early life, of great logical and argumentative powers, fully stored by reading and obversation, and a most powerful antagonist to those who would encounter him. In the defence and publication of truth, he never shrank or faltered, and as he was a companion and fellow-laborer with Jesse Lee, in New England, he was often called upon to contend against the errors of the times, both in public and private. Through his whole Christian life and ministry, he sustained a high reputation; full of years, and covered with glory, he fell in his Master's service, and entered upon his reward, aged eighty-four years, and in the sixty-second of his ministry. May many of his sons in the ministry catch his falling mantle."*

ENOCH MUDGE still lives, and bears among us a distinction scarcely less peculiar and less honorable than that of the venerable Cooper. Generations of our people have gone to the grave since he entered the ministry, and nearly all his earliest ministerial compeers have passed away, but he still remains in a sanctified old age — with a hoary head, which is indeed "a crown of glory," and with the distinguishing honor, never, from the very nature of the case, to be shared by any other, of having been *the first native Methodist preacher of New England.* He was born in Lynn, Mass., on the 21st of June, 1776, and is a direct descendant on the maternal side, from one of the first white settlers of his native town. A modest sketch of his life, prepared at the instance, and for the sole use of a beloved child, has fallen into our hands, from which we compile brief extracts, only regretting that our limits compel us to leave the most of its delightful pages for the hand which shall hereafter favor the church with a fuller portrait of our beloved friend, when his departure to heaven will allow it to be drawn in its appropriate completeness.

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* Letter of Rev. Wm. Livesey to the Editor.

"O, what a mercy," he exclaims in the record before us, "that I was born of parents that feared the Lord, and consecrated me early to him; if they did not fully know the way of the Lord when I was born, their hearts were imbued with his fear. I distinctly recollect, that among my first impressions were those made by their pious efforts to give me just views of the goodness of my Heavenly Father, and the great benevolence of my kind and gracious Redeemer. These are among my first reminiscences. Early as these impressions were made, I verily believe they were accompanied with the visitations of the Holy Spirit, and that they were never effaced. When alone, when afflicted in all the small vexations and trials of childhood, these little lessons were the guardian angels and companions of life — mingled with much childishness, and, doubtless, with some superstition, yet the seeds of truth were there. They germinated, they sprung up as tender blades; the feeble branches of good desire, childish hope, and infant devotion were regarded by him who has said, 'I will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.' Had my parents at this time known the way of truth perfectly, they doubtless had observed and cherished the fruits of their first pious effort with such instruction and prayers as would have been peculiarly seasonable and useful. While truth and grace were thus struggling for an early existence, all that is natural to an unrenewed heart was working in their usual courses, checked, indeed, but not subdued. When in my fifteenth year, the Rev. Jesse Lee came to Lynn; my parents were among the first to hear and welcome the joyful tidings of a gospel which they never before had known in such richness. They were both brought into the liberty of the truth. The fruits of piety in them were clearly discerned by me; I desired to taste and know that the Lord was good. Now pride, fear and shame, little suspected before, were felt to have the mastery. Mr. Lee's preaching was affecting, searching, humbling, soothing and instructing. I longed to have him talk with me, but dared not put myself in his way.

I resolved and re-resolved to open my mind to him, but when the time came, my heart failed — my natural diffidence seemed all at once to increase to an alarming degree — yet I ventured to pray, to pray often and fervently against all the sins of my heart. I begged for grace to conquer them, but the burden of my prayer was for conviction. I longed to feel, know and lament, the sinfulness of sin, and to be pressed down with a sense of condemnation for its guilt. Under these feelings, I hardly dared to ask for pardon of sin, as I thought I had not sufficient sense of its evil, nor contrition for my ingratitude to God, and abuse of his mercy. About four months passed away in this manner. I heard preaching, went to class-meeting, and sought the company of serious persons — read and prayed much, but was constantly saying,

'Here I repent and sin again,
Now I revive, and now am slain,' &c.

I began seriously to fear I should never know the joys of pardoned sin, never have an evidence of acceptance with God. When fear, gloom and despair began to hover over me, at a class-meeting, Mr. John Lee, who was truly a son of consolation, seeing my case, was enabled to pour in the balm of divine truth, and lead my thirsty soul to the fountain of grace, opened in the atonement for poor, weary, and heavy-laden sinners. I left the meeting with a ray of hope, retired and poured out my soul before God. Access was granted, and encouragement dawned amid the darkness. I feared to go to sleep lest I should lose the tender and encouraging views and feelings I had. I had little sleep, arose early and went forth for prayer. My mind became calm, tranquil and joyful. I was insensibly led forth in praise and gratitude to God. I drew a hymn book from my pocket and opened on the one that commences with,

'O joyful sound of gospel grace,
Christ shall in me appear;
I, even I, shall see his face;
I shall be holy here.'

The whole hymn seemed more like an inspiration from heaven than any thing of which I had a conception. I could only read a verse at a time, and then give vent to the gushing forth of joy and grateful praise. In this way I went through it. But I said to myself, What is this? Is it pardon? Is it acceptance with God? I cannot tell — but I am unspeakably happy! I dared not to say this is conversion. It is what I have sought and longed for; but O, that I could always be thus grateful to God, and have my heart flow forth in such a tide of love to my Savior. During the day, which was the 16th of September, 1791, I often sought to be alone to give vent to my feelings. At evening I sought to unbosom myself to a young man with whom I was familiar on these subjects. As soon as I had told him he burst into tears, and said, 'O, Enoch, God has blest your soul, do pray for me, that I may partake of the love, peace and joy, God has given you.' And now for the first time, my voice was heard in praying with another. My faith became confirmed, and I went on with increasing consolation and strength. In this state of mind I could not be content to enjoy such a heavenly feast alone; I took opportunity to speak to my young friends and acquaintances on the subject of religion, and recommend its ways as pleasant and delightful. When in prayer-meetings, I was pressed in spirit to pray for, and exhort them; God blessed the feeble efforts. A goodly number embraced the Savior, and devoted their lives to his service. I heard Mr. Lee preach from this text: II. Tim. 2: 19, "Let every one that nameth the name of Chirst, depart from iniquity." I felt the privilege and obligation of having been consecrated to God by parents, and of making a surrender of myself to him. It was with fear and trembling I went forward to the holy communion. But the Lord blessed his word and ordinance to me, and I found wisdom's ways pleasant and all her paths peace. I felt the need of mental and moral cultivation, and applied my mind to it, but have reason to lament the want of a judicious instructor, and of such means as would be best adapted to my case.

Under the parental roof, where prayer and praise was the delightful and daily employ of the family, when my father happened to be from home, my older brother and myself led the family devotions. O, how I bless God for the privilege of thus early affording encouragement to the hearts of my pious parents, who had so often prayed for me and their children with tears and sighs."

The economy of our church is peculiarly adapted to call out talent and direct it to its appropriate sphere. Its numerous minute services, in which every member is expected to share as he is able, bring into manifestation, generally, the whole ability of its members. From praying in the prayer-meeting, they rise to be Class Leaders, Exhorters, and, if God grants them gifts and the call of his Spirit, Local, and finally Travelling Preachers. Mr. Mudge passed through these gradations. Marblehead, Malden, Boston, and other places, were often visited by him, at the request of Mr. Lee; he began by "exhorting" at their social meetings, and, in time, expounded the Scriptures in their pulpits, applying himself, meanwhile, to his appropriate studies.

In August 1st, 1793, the New England Conference held its session in Lynn. Here he was received on trial, and appointed to Greenwich Circuit, R. I. Warren and Greenwich Circuits, were united, and included all the State of Rhode Island, and all the towns in Massachusetts as far east as Bridgewater, Middleborough, &c.

"This," he writes, "was a most important crisis in my life. I was a youth in my eighteenth year, leaving my father's house, from which I had not been absent a week at a time, in the course of my life. The Methodists were a denomination little known — generally opposed and disputed in every place they approached. Never had a preacher of this order been raised up in New England before. All eyes were opened for good or for evil. Hopes, fears and reproaches were alive on the subject. My friends felt and prayed much for me; but my own mind was keenly sensible of the importance of the undertaking. Anxiety and incessant application to duty, brought on a distressing pain in my head, and finally threw me into a fever, within two weeks after leaving home. The Lord was gracious and kept my mind in a state of resignation and peace. I felt that it was a chastening for reluctance to duty, and strove to be more entirely devoted to the work. I was very sick for a short time, but got out as soon as possible. It had been reported that I was dead, and one man, who felt an interest in my case, came to the house to make arrangements for my funeral. When I set out on my Circuit again, I was scarce able to sit on my horse, and suffered much through weakness and distress, occasioned by riding. I met with much better acceptance than I feared. The youth in almost every place appeared serious and tender under the word, and probably much of my acceptance among the older class of my hearers, was owing to the interest excited among the children. With feelings of unutterable gratitude, I returned at the close of the year to my father's house, in peace, health and gladness of heart, to see my friends, and attend Conference. Never did my parents appear so dear. Never did the quiet and retired scenes of home appear so valuable. *But I had no home now!* I felt I was but a visitor. It would be as useless as impossible, to try to describe my emotions. With a heart ready to burst with yearning for home, and the early attachments of my first Christian friendship, I left for my new appointment on New London Circuit, which required about three hundred miles travel to compass it. I attended Conference at Wilbraham, September 8th, 1794, and went thence in company with Jesse Lee, to New London, and commenced my labors. Here was a very laborious field for three preachers. The Senior preacher, Wilson Lee, was taken sick, and called off from his labors. I had daily renewed cause of gratitude for the abundant goodness of God, to such a feeble, utterly unworthy instrument as he graciously deigned to use for the good of precious souls. Riding, visiting, preaching, class and prayer-meetings, took up the time every day in the week. After the second quarter was past, which I felt was profitable to me, and I hope to many others, I went to supply the place of a preacher who had left Litchfield Circuit, Mass., and after going once round, I passed to Granville, Conn. This was an extensive Circuit, and required much labor. Here I had the happiness of having the Rev. Joshua Taylor as a fellow-laborer. He was a pious, discreet, exemplary, good preacher. I derived instruction and profit by a brotherly intercourse with him. On this Circuit, also, I first became acquainted with Timothy Merritt, before he was a preacher. His piety and devotedness to God and the cause of religion, gave an earnest of his future usefulness. He began to preach the next year. Our next Conference was held at New London. Here I received Deacon's orders, and was appointed to Readfield Circuit, in the then Province of Maine. Long rides and bad roads, crossing rivers without ferry-boats, buffetting storms, breaking roads, sleeping in open cabins and log huts, coarse and scanty fare, all served to call out the energies of the mind and body. I assure you this was a pleasant task, and a soul-satisfying scene of labor, because the people were hungry for the word. His heart must have been cold and unfeeling as stone, that could not thrill with delight at toil and privation, while received as an angel of mercy, and made welcome to such as those enjoyed, who received him for his Master's sake. O, my blessed Master! may I not hope to meet many in thy kingdom who then, first, heard and embraced the word of truth. Preaching places multiplied, our borders were enlarged, the church increased — God prospered his cause.

Readfield was the first place in the State of Maine, where a Methodist meeting-house was erected. A glorious work was commenced, that has in its advancement, filled the land. It was on this circuit I formed an acquaintance with young Joshua Soule, now Bishop Soule. I had received his wife into society, on my first Circuit, when she was only about 12 years old, and he was but about 16. He had a precocious mind — a strong memory, a manly and dignified turn, although his appearance was exceedingly rustic. In mentioning Mrs. Soule, I am reminded of several pious young females who embraced religion on my first Circuit, and who afterwards became the wives of several distinguished preachers. Among these, were Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Soule, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Ostrander, and Mrs. S. Hull. It is cheering to look over the scene, and recognize the children and children's children of those who then were brought into the church in its infancy.

In 1796 our Conference was held at Thompson, in the State of Connecticut. Here I received Elder's orders, although but just entering my twentieth year. I was stationed at Bath, in Maine. Jesse Lee, our Presiding Elder, went to the South, and was absent six months. I attended the Quarterly meetings, and went around the Circuits to administer the ordinances. This was a year of incessant labor, great exposure and toil, so that towards its close, my health failed. Although stationed at Bath, I preached there but one or two Sabbaths. The work in Maine being under my charge, in the absence of Brother Lee, I went to Penobscot, whither the appointed preacher declined going.

He supplied Bath for me, and I went on to Penobscot, picked up some scattering appointments and opened others; organized churches, sent for help,enlarged the field of labor, and had a prosperous year there. The Conference for 1797 was held in Wilbraham. The distance was so great, and the calls for labor so many, that I continued in the work at Penobscot. I was stationed at Pleasant River, to open a new Circuit in that region. The calls, however, being many and great, for preaching in the vicinity of Penobscot River, I opened many new fields of labor, in connection with the Penobscot Circuit, and Brother Timothy Merritt being stationed there, we continued our labors together on this Circuit, much enlarged — so that it was afterwards divided into several Circuits and Stations.

In August, 1798, our Conference was held in Readfield. I was now in poor health, but received a Station on Penobscot Circuit, with J. Finnegan as a helper. Divine goodness strengthened me to continue this year in the work, with some success, and much spiritual comfort. I had to be much abroad, to administer ordinances and attend to the care of the societies. My mind became much tried, towards the close of the year, on the necessity of locating. I felt all the attachment of former days to the work. But exposure and excessive labor had rendered it impossible for me to travel as extensively as formerly. The Circuits were large ; none were provided for receiving families. Our exchanges, in those days, were often from State to State, and from Conference to Conference. After much deliberation and prayer, I concluded to locate, and continue to labor in the region about home. Accordingly, in 1799, I was located. For several years we had young preachers stationed on the Penobscot and the neighboring places, and I made frequent visits abroad, to administer the ordinances, and assist the preachers. As many of the new settlements and societies had grown up since I made Orrington the place of my residence, I was called on to attend funerals, and on other occasions served in all the region round about.

From the time of locating, 1799, I continued to reside in Orrington. During these years of residence there, it pleased God to grant us several seasons of spiritual refreshing, both in that and the neighboring towns. When I first went thither, there was no church of any denomination in the region, for many miles around ; and when I first organized the church, and administered the ordinances of the gospel, there were young men and women present that had never seen a gospel ordinance administered. With the rapid increase of population and improvements, religion revived, and churches were multiplied, and many added to the Lord in different denominations ; and could we have been supplied with a sufficient number of able ministers, it appeared as if a large portion of the population would have united with us in public worship and Christian union. I had several attacks of sickness during that time, and finally my system became run down by a severe rhuematic affection, producing distressing spasmodic fits."

During his ministry in Maine, Mr. Mudge, notwithstanding his characteristic amenity, had trials as well as labors in the cause of his Lord. He was twice involved in law-suits.

The first case was for consecrating a marriage. It was assumed that Methodist ministers had no legal right to join persons in marriage, our preachers had been threatened with prosecutions, and one or two left their Circuits to avoid them. Mr. Mudge determined to take the first opportunity of having the question put to a legal decision, and accordingly, not only performed the ceremony, but invited, or rather indicated, that he was determined to stand a suit for so doing. He was accordingly prosecuted, and brought before a Justices' Court. He employed no attorney, but being called upon to answer to the charge, addressed the court in a few words, stating that he had joined persons in marriage, but not as set forth in the writ; that he was a regularly ordained minister of the gospel, proof of which he was ready to exhibit. He plead that the warrant ought to be quashed, and that he ought not to be holden to answer to it, because it was erroneous as to the names of the persons and places mentioned therein, and false in its averments that he was no minister and had no legal right to consecrate marriage, &c. But that, should his Honor see fit to overrule these pleas, he reserved all other pleadings for a higher court. After a short demur, his Honor said: "Mr. Mudge, as you appeal to Cæsar, to Cæsar you must go." "He made out a bond for me," says Mr. Mudge, "to recognize my obligation to appear at the Supreme Judicial Court, but I replied, 'I have no bondsmen, nor shall I seek any.' This I did, because I did not believe he would be willing to take the responsibility of sending me to prison. He instantly turned to the Clerk and to another Justice, and said, 'Mr. S. and Esquire F., you are doubtless willing to become bondsmen for Mr. M.' As both of them were friendly to me, they replied 'yes,' not knowing my purpose. They probably thought my delicacy about asking any one to be my bondsman, had occasioned my declining. However, all was done in apparent good feeling, and I determined to appear, and did so, at some cost and trouble, for I had to ride sixty miles over a new and bad road. Old Governor Sullivan was then States' Attorney, and had, of course, to bring the cause against me, before the Grand Jury. The Justice who was my bondsman, was also a witness, as he had seen me marry persons. By him I got my certificates of ordination in to the States' Attorney's hand and before the Grand Jury. They instantly pronounced it a malicious prosecution, and the action dropped."

The other case involved the grave charge of defamation of character. He had occasion to reprove and exhort a company of young people who had assembled for a ball or "frolic." He cautioned them against indulging in the excesses which, it had been reported, a similar party in a neighboring town had committed "in making light of religious persons and ordinances." No names were mentioned, but a person present, who was bitterly opposed to the Methodists, proceeded to the neighboring village with such exaggerated reports as roused every enemy of Methodism within it. Such, however, was the coolness of the persecuted preacher, that the prosecution was soon dropped; the justice, after hearing the case, said, "You have done perfectly right, Mr. Mudge;" and most of the persecutors were afterwards converted to God, and became the most steadfast friends of the preacher, and devoted members of the church. "Such instances of unreasonable persecution," writes Mr. Mudge, "tended greatly to awaken the sympathies of the more considerate, and, by divine goodness and wisdom, led them to take a more decided stand for truth and righteousness; by them the Methodists became more known and respected, and those who at first opposed us, sooner or later became ashamed of their barbarity, and learned to esteem us."

In 1811–12, a general sensation was produced by several instances of oppressive taxation for the support of the Congregational Ministry. The other denominations were aroused, and the Legislature of Massachusetts was petitioned from every quarter to afford relief from such oppressions. With a view to the promotion of their object, Mr. Mudge was elected a member of the Legislature, as were many other ministers of the gospel, of all dissenting denominations. The Speaker's table was loaded with petitions, and the result was the passage of what has since been called the RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BILL. In 1815–16, he was again honored with an election to the Legislature. In the latter year, he concluded to remove from Maine, with a view, he writes,

> "To recover my health, or rather to leave my family in a situation which I deemed more favorable for their comfort, in case of my decease, which appeared to be likely to take place at no distant period. The winter after moving to Lynn, I was more confined, and under the care of a physician, whose prescriptions, by the divine blessing, were rendered peculiarly beneficial; so that, by the time of the next Conference, I was able to take an appointment in Boston, where, by careful attention for two years, (1817–18,) although the duties of the station were arduous, I was much recruited in health. The Lord revived his work, and Brother Timothy Merritt and myself labored in much harmony, peace and comfort."

At the Lynn Conference, 1819, he was stationed in Lynn, "where," he writes, "I found great pleasure in renewing my early acquaintance with those who were left of the first class of Methodists, with whom I united — it being, also, the first in this region of the country." He was elected at the same time a member of the State Convention for revising the constitution of Massachusetts.

> "Towards the close of the year," he writes, "the Lord began to pour out his Spirit. We had fasted, prayed, and struggled against various discouragements, but a bright morning of hope

dawned, and I was re-appointed to Lynn, at the Nantucket Conference. During this revival, about one hundred were received into the church, many of whom live, as lights and ornaments of our Zion. Such reminiscences are cheering to the worn traveller. At the Barre Conference, 1821, I received my station at Portsmouth, N. H. Here, although nothing remarkable occurred, I spent two years in a pleasant and comfortable manner, and left the church in peace. At Providence Conference, 1823, I was stationed at Providence. This, on the account of previous difficulties and divisions, was an appointment of importance. Thanks to the God of all grace and peace, I was not only enabled to live in peace with all men, but was enabled to conduct the affairs of our church in a peaceful and prosperous course for two years, and left them in great harmony.

"At the Cambridge Conference, 1825, I was stationed at Newport. In 1827–28, I was stationed at East Cambridge. The next two years, 1829–30, I was stationed at Duxbury. These were pleasant and profitable years."

In 1831, he was appointed to Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he had labored about ten months, when he was called to the onerous and responsible charge of the seamen's chapel, in New Bedford. Of his usefulness in this sphere, and the hold which he acquired on the regard of all classes of citizens, we cannot speak here; the task will devolve on an abler hand at a suitable time, when a fuller detail of his laborious life, and a more unreserved delineation of his rare and admirable character, will, we trust, perpetuate in the church the fragrant memory of her first New England born evangelist. He continued at his post in New Bedford till 1844, when, having had two attacks of paralysis, he was compelled to resign it to a successor. He left that city with the regrets and blessings of its whole community,* and now, at the mature age of seventy, has retired to his native town of Lynn, where, in the first Methodist society organized in Massachusetts, amidst the endearing reminiscences of his childhood, and the fellowship of the few veterans who still linger there from the days of Lee, he waits with cheerful piety for the summons which shall admit him to the company of his old co-laborers.

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* Among many other demonstrations of respect, which he received at the time from various sources, the Selectmen of New Bedford, "impressed with a deep sense of the advantages which the community has received from his devoted and judicious exertions, and with the conviction that his efforts have been highly effective in promoting the peace, quietness and good order of the town," sent him a formal address of thanks.

Mr. Mudge is below the usual height in stature, stoutly framed, with a full round face healthfully colored, and expressive of the perfect benignity and amiability of his spirit. His undiminished, but silvered hair, crowns him with a highly venerable aspect. In manners, he would have been a befitting companion for St. John. The spirit of Christian charity imbues him ; hopefulness, cheerfulness, entire reliance on God, confidence in friends, extreme care to give no offence, and a felicitous relish of the reliefs and comforts of green old age, are among his marked characteristics. He has been distinguished by fine pulpit qualifications—fertility of thought, a warmth of feeling without extravagance, a peculiar richness of illustration, and a manner always self-possessed and marked by the constitutional amenity of his temper. None were ever wearied under his discourses. He has published a volume of excellent sermons for mariners, and many poetical pieces of more than ordinary merit.

# CHAPTER XI.

## FURTHER SKETCHES OF THE MINISTRY OF 1793–4.

George Pickering — His Life — Character — Death — Daniel Ostrander — His great Labors — Hezekiah Calvin Woorster — The Power of his Ministry — Zadok Priest — Joshua Hall — Amos G. Thompson — Benjamin Fisler — John Hill — Joseph Lovell — Jason Perkins.

THE name of another "prince and great man" in Israel, appears for the first time in the New England appointments of this year — the venerable name of GEORGE PICKERING, who also bore a peculiar and noble distinction in the church. During the last year of his life, he was *the oldest effective Methodist preacher in the world.* At the time of his death, December 1846, there were but two members of American Conferences* who had preceded him in the ministry, and but fourteen in England. All these, however, had retired from active service, leaving him with the signal distinction we have mentioned. When he entered New England, there were but eighteen Methodist preachers within what are now called the New England Conferences; when he fell, it was at the head of a band of six hundred and thirty-six, most of whom had been raised up by the instrumentality of himself and his colleagues. The membership within the same limits, was not five hundred at his arrival, but he departed amidst the benedictions of more than sixty-six thousand. For more than half a century, he stood among our churches, not only an active agent, but a striking, personal exemplification of primitive Methodism. He was looked upon with reverence as a living monument of our whole history. Unique alike in character and historical position, he presents himself to our consideration, with rare interest, and though he has left but the scantiest data for any memorial of his remarkable life, it is not befitting that such a man should descend to the grave without some commemorative record, however imperfect.

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* They were Ezekiel Cooper, of Philadelphia Conference, and Joshua Wells, of Baltimore Conference. It is a fact worthy of remark, that these three oldest members of American Conferences, in 1846, were laborers for longer or shorter periods in New England.

In the semi-centennial sermon of his ministry, delivered before the New England Conference in 1840, at Lowell, Mass., he said:

> "I was born in Talbot County, Md., in 1769, brought up in Philadelphia, and converted in St. George's Church, in that city, at the age of eighteen. I commenced preaching immediately; joined the Conference in 1790, and have continued an Itinerant minister, without interruption, for more than *fifty years.*
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> "When I joined, there was but about *five* Conferences, two hundred and twenty-seven travelling preachers, forty-six thousand white, and eleven or twelve thousand colored members. Five or six only of those ministers are now living, and I only continue in the Itinerancy. My first Circuit was one of four weeks, called the Northampton Circuit, Va. That year, our increase in the connection was eighteen thousand. In 1791, I was appointed to the Caroline Circuit, between the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays.
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> "I was stationed in Boston in 1796, and preached in a private room till we built the church, in what was called 'Methodist Alley.' Thence, I went to Needham Circuit, and then took charge of the New England District, which included all of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, as far as Montpelier.
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> "I am now an old man, and shall not labor much longer with you.

But go on, my brethren, — preach Jesus, — preach with the Holy Ghost. Preach to the people the blessed doctrine of holiness; *it is the only thing that will bind the Methodist church together.*

"Pray for me, my brethren, and the blessing of an old man be upon you."

There is a long hiatus in this statement, which we can supply, however, from the Annual Minutes. After travelling Caroline Circuit, during 1791, he labored one year on the Dover, Del., Circuit. In 1793, four years after the arrival of Lee, he came to New England, and was appointed to Hartford Circuit, as colleague of Joshua Hall, who still survives him.

We give in detail his subsequent appointments — a striking example of Methodist Itinerancy. In 1794, Tolland; 1795, Lynn; 1796, Boston and Needham; the following four years, Presiding Elder of the New England District, including the whole field of Methodism in the New England States, except Maine and Connecticut. We can scarcely form a conception, amidst the facilities of travelling in these days, of the vast journies and equal labors comprised in this extraordinary District. Commencing at Providence, it extended down the Providence River, taking in the appointments on both its shores, to Newport; thence it reached to the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket; thence it swept the whole of Cape Cod, to Provincetown, and returning, took in all the eastern portion of Massachusetts, extended to all the interior appointments of the State, except one on its western boundary, and penetrated through New Hampshire, to beyond the centre of Vermont. In 1801, he was appointed to Boston, Lynn and Marblehead; 1802, Salisbury and Hawke; the following four years, Boston District; 1807, the city of Boston; 1809, he was Missionary at large; then on Boston District, again, for four years; 1813–14, Boston city; the ensuing two years, Lynn; 1817, Boston District, for four years; the next three years, Missionary at large; 1844, Missionary at Newburyport and Gloucester; the next five years, Missionary at large; 1830–31, Easton and Bridgewater; 1832, Lowell; 1833, Cambridge; 1834, Worcester; 1835, Marblehead and Salem; 1836, Charlestown; 1837, Watertown Mission; 1838, Watertown and Waltham; 1839, Roxbury; 1840–41, Weston; 1842, Saxonville; 1843, Church street, Boston; 1844–45, Medford; 1846, North Reading — remarkable record of tireless travels, labors and privations, in the work of his divine Master, during fifty-seven years! There is a severe and significant eloquence in this bare recital of names and dates, which no comments can enhance.

Sixteen of these years were spent in travelling vast and most laborious Districts, and nine in the labors of a Missionary at large, besides several local Missionary appointments. His frequent appoinments as Missionary, were designed to afford him the opportunity of "breaking up new ground," as it was called — a species of labor in which he was peculiarly successful. He sat in all the General Conferences of the church, (save two,) during forty years. In the delegations of 1836 and 1840, his venerable name, which had hitherto *in every instance*, headed the New England list, was superseded by those of *Orange Scott* and *Jotham Horton*, respectively, — significant circumstances, — but in 1844 he took his seat again, and for the last time, in the highest assembly of the church, and witnessed the solemn catastrophe of its division. He had the honor to be one of the committee of the General Conference, in 1808, which first projected the formal organization of a delegated General Conference.

Most of our early preachers were compelled to locate, for the support of their families. By a fortunate and providential marriage, Mr. Pickering was saved from this common necessity.

The town of Waltham, often referred to, hereafter, in these pages, is one of the most picturesque localities in Massachusetts; a beautiful plain, adorned with foliage — washed on the south by the Charles River, and bordered on the north by a range of highlands. A road gradually ascends from the plain, and winds among the farms and landscapes of these highlands. Pursuing it some two or three miles, the traveller reaches an avenue, or private road, which extends amidst attractive prospects, about half a mile, to a spacious and most comfortable looking mansion partially elevated on the side of a basin or natural amphitheatre, which is nearly a mile in diameter and adorned by charming scenery. The house itself was, at an earlier day, encompassed by extensive orchards, whose fragrance in Spring surrounded it with an atmosphere of perfume. Here, in the first days of Methodism, was the asylum of its laborious Itinerants in New England — the favorite retreat of Asbury, Whatcoat, Lee, Roberts, Hedding, &c. We shall, hereafter, frequently see the former wending his way, with a longing heart, to the tranquil seclusion of this hospitable solitude.

The proprietor of the mansion, Mr. Abraham Bemis, was one of the first fruits of Methodism in the East. With an unrestrained liberality, he opened his doors for its evangelists, and for many years his house was alike their home and their temple. Hundreds gathered for years, in the shade of his orchards, to hear them preach; and many were there awakened and converted, including all Mr. Bemis' family, and most of his relations. The old Weston Society was formed under his roof — his name being the first on its roll. Like most of the families noted in those days for their entertainment of God's messengers, his hospitality returned in a hundred-fold prosperity; his acres increased, and abundance surrounded him. He died at the advanced age of eighty-seven, triumphant in the faith and hope of the gospel. His daughter, Mary Bemis, was converted in her seventeenth year, and, in her nineteenth, was married to George Pickering, to whom has since pertained the family mansion, and who, down to his death, maintained its primitive hospitality. Thus, furnished with a permanent and competent home for his family, he was at liberty to pursue his vocation as an ambassador of Christ.*

George Pickering was a rare man in all respects. Any just delineation of him must comprehend the whole man, for it was not his distinction to be marked by a few extraordinary traits, but by general excellence.

In person, he was tall, slight, and perfectly erect. His countenance was expressive of energy, shrewdness, self-command and benignity, and his silvered locks, combed precisely behind his ears, gave him, in his latter years, a strikingly venerable appearance. The exactitude of his mind extended to all his physical habits. In pastoral labors, exercise, diet, sleep and dress, he followed a fixed course, which scarcely admitted deviation. In the last respect, he was peculiarly neat, holding, with an old divine, that "cleanliness comes next to holiness." He continued to the last, to wear the plain Quakerlike dress of the first Methodist ministry, and none could be more congruous with the bearing of his person and his venerable aspect. His voice was clear and powerful, and his step firm, to the end.

His *intellectual traits* were not of the highest, but of the most useful order. *Method* was, perhaps, his strongest mental habit, and it comprehended nearly every detail of his daily life. His sermons were thoroughly skeletonized. His personal habits had the mechanical regularity of clock-work.

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* Our Artist, Nutting, of Boston, has given an excellent engraving of Pickering's Homestead, on the title page.

During his Itinerant life, he devoted to his family, at Waltham, Mass., a definite portion of his time; but even these domestic visits were subjected to the most undeviating regularity. During fifty years of married life, he spent, upon an average, but about one fifth of his time at home — an aggregate of ten years out of fifty! The rigor of his habits may, indeed, have been too severe. It reminds us of the noble, but defective virtue of the old Roman character. If business called him to the town of his family residence, at other times than those appropriated to his domestic visits, he returned to his post of labor without crossing the threshold of his home. In that terrible calamity, which spread gloom over the land — the burning of the steamer Lexington, by night, on Long Island Sound — he lost a beloved daughter; the intensity of the affliction was not capable of enhancement, yet he stood firmly on his ministerial watch-tower, though with a bleeding heart, while his family, but a few miles distant, were frantic with anguish. Not till the due time did he return to them; when it arrived, he entered his home with a sorrow-smitten spirit — pressed in silence the hand of his wife, and, without uttering a word, retired to an adjacent room, where he spent some hours in solitude and unutterable grief. Such a man reminds us of Brutus, and in the heroic times would have been commemorated as superhuman.

The trait next prominent in the character of his mind, was its *perspicacity*. He pretended to no subtlety, and was seldom, if ever, known to preach a metaphysical discourse. The literal import of the Scriptures, and its obvious applications to experimental and practical religion, formed the substance of his sermons. Perspicuity of style resulted from this perspicacity of thought. The most unlettered listener could have no difficulty in comprehending his meaning, and the children of his audience, generally shared the interest of his adult hearers. Bombast and metaphysical elaborateness in the pulpit, he silently but profoundly contemned, as indicating a lack both of good sense and disinterested purpose in the preacher. A man of few words is either a sage or an imbecile ; George Pickering was seldom, if ever, known to occupy three minutes at a time in the discussions (usually so diffuse) of the Annual Conferences, and the directness of his sentences, and the pertinent sense of his counsels, always indicated the practical sage.

Prudence, almost unerring prudence, was another marked attribute of his mind. It is possible he may not have seen, as clearly as some of his brethren, the propriety of several recent public measures — old men cling tenaciously to the routine of old courses — but if not sagacious at seizing new opportunities, he was almost infallibly perfect in that negative prudence which secures safety and confidence. No man who knew him, would have apprehended surprise or defeat in any measure undertaken by him, after his usual deliberation. His character was full of energy, as his labors indicate ; but it was the energy of the highest order of minds — never wavering, never impulsive. He would have excelled in any department of public life which requires chiefly wisdom and virtue. As a statesman, he would always have been secure, if not successful ; as a military commander, his whole character would have guarantied that confidence, energy, discipline and sagacity which win victory more effectually than hosts.

In combination with these characteristics, and forming no unfavorable contrast with them, was his well-known *humor*. We have already referred to, and attempted to account for, the prevalence of this trait among the early members of our ministry. It seemed natural to the constitution of Mr. Pickering's mind. In him, however, it was always benevolent.

In a long acquaintance, we never knew it once to take the form of satire. It was that "sanctified wit," as it has been called, which pervades the writings of Henry, Fuller, and other early religious authors in our literature; and the smile excited by it in the hearer, was caused more by an odd and surprising appropriateness in his remarks or illustrations, than by any play of words or pungency of sentiment.

The moral features of his character were pre-eminent, and yet we feel a difficulty in attempting to discriminate them. They blended too much into a whole, to admit of individual prominence. No one virtue stood out in relief amidst a multitude of contrasting defects. The best designation we can give of his character is, that *it was uniform and complete integrity*, and this comprehensive estimate will need no qualification to any one who knew him intimately. In most monumental structures, we can distinguish the component parts, but in the sublime obelisk which commemorates, on Bunker's Hill, the birth of our liberty, we see no pedestal, cornice or capitol. The enduring granite that forms its foundation, rises a severe, but noble unity, till it tapers away to the skies. It is a fitting symbol of the moral character of this extraordinary man. Had he lived in the days of the Roman Commonwealth, he might have competed with Cato for the Censorship; not so much, however, from his rigorous construction of the morals of others, as by the rigorous perfection of his own.

In his religious character he was unaffectedly and profoundly devout. He had an unwavering *Faith* in the evangelical doctrines. "Christ, and him crucified," was the joy of his heart, the ground of his hope, and the theme of his preaching. His zeal was ardent, but steady — never flickering through fifty-seven years of ministerial labors and travels. It gave peculiar energy to his discourses. For more than half a century his armor was never off, but he was always ready for every good word and work. He was incessant in *prayer*, and whoever heard from him a languid supplication? He continued to the last the goodly habit, common among his early associates in the ministry, of praying after meals, in any company, however casual or vivacious the circle. He was a man of one work, the ministry of reconciliation — and of one purpose, the glory of God.

It was befitting that the oldest effective Methodist preacher in the world should cease to live when he ceased to work. He fell in his fortress. After a week of illness and much pastoral labor, during which he was often compelled, by weakness, to repose on the road-side, he ascended the pulpil on the Sabbath; but during the sermon he sunk down insensible, and was carried from the church to his lodgings. The next day was the regular time for his periodical visit to his family. He started, therefore, the same Sabbath afternoon, for a village at the depot of the railroad on which he was to pass to his home the following morning. Though languishing with a fever, he insisted on preaching that evening. It was a discourse of great power — his last proclamation of the "glorious gospel."

On reaching his home, his fate was sealed. At one time, however, his symptoms were favorable, and his physician informed him that the crisis of the disease was past. He called his companion to his bedside, and ordered his clothes to be immediately prepared, that he might depart the next day to his charge. The ruling passion was strong in death.

Better things were reserved for him. His work was done, and the reward at hand. He continued to decline during several weeks; his faith, meanwhile, growing stronger, and his hope brighter, each day. His chamber became a sanctuary where the glory of God descended and abode. A company of his Christian friends in Boston, including all the pastors of the city, visited him shortly before his departure. One of them has given the following description of their interview.

"Such was his extreme feebleness, that visitors, and even audible devotional exercises had been almost entirely inadmissible in his chamber. It was feared, therefore, before our arrival, that it would be possible only for us to send up to him the assurance of our Christian regard, without the privilege of a personal interview. At his own request, however, we were all permitted to approach his bedside. A scene ensued there, which no pen can describe. As it was impossible for him to address the visitors individually, one of them was designated to speak to him in behalf of all; but under the necessary restriction of doing so in the briefest possible manner. On taking the hand of the aged sufferer, he opened his eyes, and showed his recognition of the brother addressing him, by tears of affection. The following brief conversation ensued.

"Beloved father, a number of your ministerial brethren are present, and have requested me to express to you their Christian affection and sympathy."

He replied, with strong emphasis and tears, "I thank you; you all have a high place in my affection."

"They are happy to learn that in this your extremity, you still rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

"Yes! O yes!"

"That you feel that the sting of death is extracted."

"Yes! O yes!"

"And that you can resign yourself fully into the hands of your Lord."

"Yes, O yes; glory be to his name!"

Grasping the hand of the brother addressing him, with still firmer hold, he then, with tears and sobs, exclaimed: —

"You all have my high esteem and affection. Tell, O tell the brethren to preach Christ and him crucified — an all-able, all-powerful, all-willing, all-ready Savior — a present Savior, *saving now.* Preach, Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. O, tell them to preach *holiness;* holiness is the principal thing. Preach holiness, holiness, holiness — God enable you to preach holiness."

His emotions overcame him — he attempted to say more, but the brother conducting the conversation, closed it by saying: —

"We thank God, dear father, for the good testimony and counsel we have been permitted to receive from you — we shall never forget it. We regret that your condition will not allow us to linger longer with you; trusting that the agitation of your feelings will not injure you, we take our leave, to meet you in heaven. God bless you! Farewell!"

The scene was touching and sublime — a hoary and heroic veteran of the cross was standing between both worlds, about to disappear from his fellow-laborers forever, on earth. Full of years, and virtues, and services, he was now victorious over death and giving his departing counsels to his brethren. We broke away from the room, so near the gate of heaven, with deep emotions, and assembled in the parlor below, where we sung, within reach of his hearing,

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand," &c.

After which, the company knelt in prayer, and committing the venerable saint, his family and ourselves, to God, we returned to the city, thanking God, "who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and feeling that we had enjoyed a memorable day.

The hero of so many fields, died as he had lived — victorious. His last distinct utterance was, "All my affairs for time and eternity are settled. Glory be to God!" And the last whisper caught by his attendants, was the word "GLORY!"

A man of such character could not fail to be interesting in any position in life. He was interesting as a preacher. His word was in power, pungent with the truth of God, and a forceful directness of style. Not only in his earlier, but in his latter years, he ascended the pulpil with the energy of a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. After the introductory devotions, and the announcement of his text, he usually closed the Bible, and placing the hymn book upon it, and his spectacles on the hymn book, entered into his discourse with a hearty earnestness which immediately arrested the attention of his hearers. As he proceeded, he warmed with his subject. At intervals, a unique illustration, or striking remark would kindle the attention of the audience with manifest vivacity, and often would his voice rise to the energy of youth, in words of admonition to his hearers, or adoration to his Lord. His subjects were the common ones, but his remarks were never common-place. Like all sententious men, he was brief, and never allayed the interest he had excited, by presuming too much upon it.

He was interesting as a man. His conversation was always entertaining, abounding in incidents, anecdotes, pithy and sagacious remarks, and relieved by his tranquil humor. This latter trait gave a charming air of cheerfulness to his presence. It never marred his religious conversation, but was so peculiar to himself, that it seemed befitting, and so subdued and benign as not to be incongruous even with evangelical topics. He was a perfect gentleman in manners. Above the grimace and ceremony of factitious politeness, he was, nevertheless, so marked by the dignity and propriety of his bearing, as to strike the attention of strangers, whether in company or in the casual salutations of the street, with the impression of a man to whom courtesy and propriety were as instincts. He was liberal to all Christians, of whatever name; not to their errors, but to their persons — well knowing that bigotry in himself might be as offensive, in the sight of God, as heresy in his neighbors, and that imperious exclusiveness is not the most efficacious means of rectifying the faults of the erring.

Such was George Pickering — pure in character, laborious in life, triumphant in death.

Another well-known name occurs in this list of veterans — that of DANIEL OSTRANDER. His prominence, for many years, in the New York Conference — where he continued until our own day, a representative of the earlier times — has identified him in the public mind, with that body, and but few of the present generation of New England Methodists know any thing of his intimate connection with their early history. Daniel Ostrander was, nevertheless, one of the founders of Methodism in New England. He *commenced* his ministry within our limits, and spent the first *thirteen years* of it (save one) in sharing the trials and struggles of Lee, Roberts, Pickering, Mudge, Taylor, and their associates; laboring indefatigably in western Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode

Island, and as far east as Boston. He was born, August 9th, 1772, in Plattekill, Ulster County, N. Y. His ancestors were Hollanders, and his whole career was an exemplification of the old Tuetonic vigor. Upon no other class of population did Methodism exert a more profound effect, and from none did it produce more indomitable laborers.

Daniel Ostrander was converted in his sixteenth year, and from that date devoted his life wholly to God. He entered upon his ministerial travels in 1793, as colleague of Lemuel Smith, on Litchfield Circuit. In 1794, he travelled with Menzies Rainor the Middletown Circuit. The three following years he was successively on Pomfret, Conn., Warren, R. I., and Boston and Needham Circuits. In 1798, he returned to Pomfret, as colleague of Asa Heath, who still survives him. The three succeeding years his appointments were Tolland, Pomfret and New York city. He next took charge, for two years, of the New London District, which comprehend, during a part of that time, the entire field of Methodism in Connecticut, except one Circuit, most of Rhode Island, and a portion of Massachusetts. On retiring from this District he entered Duchess Circuit, N. Y., where he continued two years.

From 1808 to 1827, he labored in Brooklyn ; Albany city, two years ; on Hudson River District, four years ; at Chatham ; New York city, four years ; New Rochelle ; Ashgrove District, four years, and Hudson River District, four years. In 1827 he re-entered New England, and superintended the New Haven District. The next year he presided over the New York District, which extended into the south western section of Connecticut. He continued in this responsible charge four years, at the expiration of which time, he was appointed to New York city, where he labored two years. The following two years he was at New Rochelle, and in 1836 became, for four years more, Presiding Elder of the New York District. In 1840, he took charge of the Newburg District, where he continued till 1843, when he retired into the ranks of the superannuated, which then included, in the New York Conference, a goodly company of veterans, his companions in the early struggles of Methodism in New England, such as B. Hibbard, Elijah Woolsey, John Crawford, Lewis Pease, Aaron Hunt, Eben Smith, Ebenezer Washburn, &c.

"From the year 1793 to the year 1843," says his brethren of New York Conference,* "a full term of fifty years, so remarkably did the Lord preserve him, that only three Sabbaths in all that time was he disabled from pulpit service by sickness. Where, in the history of ministers, shall we find a parallel to this? To record his services in all the places of his labor might be more tedious than interesting; suffice it to say, that for fourteen years he was on Circuits, eight years in Stations, (New York, Brooklyn and Albany,) and twenty-eight years in the weighty and responsible office of Presiding Elder. The Districts of New London, New Haven, Saratoga, Hudson River, New York, and Newburg, remember him with affection. His high standing in the esteem of his brethren in Conference, appears from the fact, that since the establishment of the delegated General Conference in 1808, they always elected him a member of that highest judicatory in our church, down to the year 1840, inclusive; and never has his seat in an Annual Conference been vacant, during the forty-eight years that the writer of this article has known him, till called to his reward. The same is thought to have been the case, from the time of his admission as a member of this body. His firm integrity, sound judgment, and solid piety, won the confidence of his brethren. He identified himself with all the interests of the church, as a faithful and wise steward. Always at his post, and prompt to serve, whether on a Circuit, in a Station, in Quarterly Meetings, in Annual or General Conferences, and on all suitable occasions, his clear voice, his manly eloquence, his decision of mind, his sound arguments and his ardent zeal, all showed that he preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy; yet it was in the pulpit that his preference shone the brighest — so warm in delivery, sound in doctrine, clear in preaching, pungent in warning, heavenly in comforting, and graceful in encouraging, that hard must have been the heart in his audience that could sit unmoved, or go away unprofited; for a divine unction gave power to the word. Yea, we have heard him preach, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, till the shouts of saints and the cries of penitents mingled, completely drowned the highest strain of his stentorian voice.

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* Minutes of 1843-4.

"Such was Daniel Ostrander. Firmly, faithfully, and wisely, did he hold on to the plough, nor look back till called into his heavenly rest. He was well schooled at an early day; for the first nine years of his Itinerant life were spent, principally, among the sharp-eyed opponents of Methodism of that day, in New England, where the battles of controversy called into action all the heavenly armor so essentially necessary as a panoply of a Methodist preacher. There, in all his conflicts, he proved himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. It was there, too, that He, who gave Adam his Eve, gave our dear brother his excellent Mary Bowen, who had, in 1793, in the bloom of her youth, believed in Jesus and embraced Methodism perseveringly, in defiance of all the persecution which her choice of this people involved her in, till shielded by the protection of so worthy a husband of such an excellent wife. Such were Daniel and Mary Ostrander. Lovely in their lives, and in their death (almost) not divided; for, in January, 1844, five weeks from the death of her husband, she triumphantly left the world and joined him in glory.

"In the New York Annual Conference of 1843, we for the last time saw his face and heard his well-known voice. His fifty years' effective work was now done. We were not willing to lose him from the effective list. A committee from the Conference waited on him, to know if he would try another year's voyage with us — but no: the same decision of mind which had characterized him through life, fixed him in his purpose to superannuate. The Circuit asked of him a semi-centennial sermon, to which he cheerfully consented. We heard it in the presence of a numerous audience, in Allen Street Church, New York. As he had been, in a manner, the father of that charitable institution, the Mutual Assistance Society of the New York Conference, he remained President of it till his death. With this exception, he wisely laid aside all the high responsibilities of church offices, and retired: but for how short a time! He preached, occasionally, on Sabbaths, until his last sickness, and on the 29th of August, 1843, at a camp-meeting near Newburg, he preached his last sermon, from Psalm 146: 8: 'The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind,' &c. It is said to have been an able discourse, and one of his happiest efforts.

"Through the whole of the Summer he seemed to be ripening for glory, and soon after this last message his health failed, and his patient, humble, tranquil mind seemed cheerfully to look forward to the approaching crisis to which he drew near with all that serenity which is common to the pure in heart, and died in perfect peace, in full prospect of his immortal crown; for when, in view of eternity, he was asked if he was ready and willing to go, he replied, 'Yes, I know not any reason why I should not be.' This was the last sentence that he spoke, so completely was his strength exhausted. Yet when it was said to him that Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and that St. John saith, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,' he with joy glowing in his countenance exclaimed, 'Yes,' and when asked if Jesus was still precious, with his last and utmost effort he cried, 'Yes!' and peacefully fell asleep in Jesus. So lived, so labored, so suffered, and so died our beloved brother, Daniel Ostrander, literally worn out in the best cause — his life, from sixteen years of age to seventy-two, a living sacrifice to God. Thousands will rise up in the last day and call him blessed."

It is no small honor to New England that *Hezekiah Calvin Woorster* began his powerful though brief ministry within its limits. His first appearance on the roll of the Itinerant host was in the present year, when he was appointed to Granville Circuit, Mass. He began his labors professing and enjoying the blessing of that "perfect love which casteth out fear," and his short, but useful career, was attended with demonstrations of the entire consecration of his character. After laboring in 1794 and 5, on Elizabethtown (N. J.) and Columbia (N. Y.) Circuits, respectively, he volunteered with Samuel Coate, to join James Coleman and Darius Dunham, in the new and laborious field of Upper Canada. His trials there were great. During three weeks, on his way, he lodged every night under the trees of the forests. He passed through the wilderness of that remote region like a "flame of fire;" the long neglected and impenitent settlers trembled under his word, while the few and scattered saints shouted aloud for joy. "Such," says the historian of Methodism, "was the holy fervor of his soul, his deep devotion to God, his burning love for the souls of his fellow men, that he was the happy instrument of kindling up such a fire in the hearts of the people wherever he went, particularly in Upper Canada, that all the waters of strife and opposition have not been able to quench it * * *. The grace of God wrought mightily in him."* "O, what awful sensations," exclaims the same writer, "ran through the assemblies while Calvin Woorster, and others of like spirit, were denouncing the just judgments of God against impenitent sinners, in such pointed language as made the 'ear to tingle' and the heart to palpitate." "Frequently," continues the same authority, "was his voice heard, by the families where he lodged, in the night season, when rising from his bed, while others slept, he would pour out the desire of his soul unto God in earnest prayer for the salvation of souls." And he further informs us that such was the unction of his spirit, and the bold, resistless power of his appeals to the wicked, that few of them could stand before him; they would either rush out of the house, or fall like dead men under his word. He was a man of great prevalence in prayer. An anecdote is related in illustration of the power of his faith. A revival occurred under his labors, which was attended with overpowering effects among the people. His Presiding Elder, Rev. Mr. D——, entering the assembly at a time when sinners were falling to the earth under the power of the truth, and the people of God were rejoicing in their victory, condemned the excitement as wildfire, and knelt down to pray that God would allay it. The devout Woorster knelt by his side and in a whispering tone prayed, "Lord bless Bro. D——! Lord bless Bro. D——." He had not prayed thus many minutes, before the Presiding Elder was smitten down upon the floor, and was so filled with the Holy Ghost that his complaints were turned into grateful praise, and he went forth spreading the divine flame through the length and breadth of his District, "to the joy and salvation of hundreds of immortal souls." *

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, Anno 1799.

Mr. Woorster labored with great success in Canada, during 1796–7–8. † In the latter year he was seized with pulmonary consumption, but such was the moral power of this truly

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, Anno 1799.

† See letter of his father, in the Minutes of 1799.

remarkable man — seeming almost to border on the miraculous — that it is authentically recorded, that when so far reduced as not to be able to speak above a whisper, his whispered utterance, conveyed by another to the assembly, would thrill them like a trumpet, and fall with such energy on the attention of the hearers, that stout hearted men were smitten down to the floor; and his very aspect is said to have so shone with "the divine glory that it struck conviction into the hearts of many who beheld it."*

His end corresponded with his life. In June, 1798, he returned from Canada to his parental home, to die. When scarcely able to speak, he was asked "If his confidence was still strong in the Lord?" "Yes, strong! strong!" was his victorious answer. As his bodily strength was fast failing, and death was in view, he exclaimed, "That the nearer he drew to eternity, the brighter heaven shined upon him." He died on the 6th of November, 1798, not 28 years of age, but "strong in the faith and love of Jesus." The following lines were found among his papers: "Hezekiah Calvin Woorster was born May 20, 1771; convicted of sin Oct. 9, 1791; born again Dec. 1, 1791; sanctified February 6, 1792."

ZADOCK PRIEST was also a youthful martyr to the excessive labors of those times of struggle and victory. A few still linger about the regions of the old circuits of New London and Warren, in whose hearts the preciousness of his memory remains unabated by the changes and sorrows of the half century which has passed over his youthful grave. He was a native of Connecticut, and commenced his ministry the present year on Pittsfield Circuit. The next year he travelled the New London Circuit with Wilson Lee, David Abbott, and Enoch Mudge, a noble quaternion. In 1795 he labored on Warren Circuit, where he was attacked with hemorrhage of the lungs, which terminated in consumption. Like young Woorster, and at about the same age, he retired from his work to die. There resided at that time, and for many subsequent years, at Norton, Mass., a venerable Methodist, known as "Father Newcomb;" his house, like that of Mr. Bemis, at Waltham, was ever open as an asylum for the Methodist Itinerants. Thither Mr. Priest went — "to die with them," as he said when the door was opened to receive him. He was confined there three weeks, and then passed down into the valley and shadow of death, expressing "a strong confidence in the favor of God, and no doubt of his salvation." He died on the 22d of June, 1796, in the 27th year of his age,[*] and was buried on the estate of Mr. Newcomb, where he now sleeps in Jesus. He was generally beloved, and a Christian brother now rests by his side, who esteemed him so highly in life as to request that he might sleep with him in death — beautiful example of the endearment of Christian affection!

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, Anno 1799.

JOSHUA HALL'S labors as a Methodist preacher were extensive and exceedingly varied. His Itinerant ministry was limited to about ten years, but during that time he preached in most of the New England States, and formed some of our most important societies.

He was born in Lewistown, Sussex Co., Del., Oct. 22, 1768, and "experienced religion in Kent County, near Millford, in February, 1787."[†] In November, 1791, he was sent by Asbury to the North, and passed to Elizabethtown Circuit, on which he travelled the remainder of the year. In 1792, he was admitted on probation by the Conference at New York and appointed to Croton Circuit, N. Y.[‡] The next year he entered New England and became the colleague of Geo. Pickering, on Hartford Circuit. "Here," he says, "we labored part of the year and formed New London Circuit." In 1794, he was appointed to "Vermont," but did not travel there. "Jesse Lee," he writes, "had made a tour through Fitchburg, Ashburnham, Rindge, Selby, Marlboro', Parkersfield, Dublin, Chesterfield, Orange, Hardwick and Athol. I had to go and supply a long series of appointments, to which he pledged that a preacher should be sent after the Conference. George Cannon, who was expected, did not come, and I felt it my duty to remain till the next Conference, which sat at New London."

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[*] Minutes, 1796.

[†] Letter to the Writer.

[*] Letter to the Writer. His appointment this year is not mentioned in the Minutes.

In 1795, by a long transition, he passed to Penobscot Circuit, Me., which had recently been surveyed by Lee. He was the third Methodist preacher sent to that State, and the first who labored after Lee on the Penobscot. "I met with much opposition there," he says, "but he who regards the shorn lamb sustained me." A gracious reformation cheered him in this distant and difficult field. He formed the first societies which were organized along that river. "God," he remarks, "wonderfully blessed my feeble labors, and when I left I had occasion to exclaim, What hath God wrought!" Before the next Conference, he labored about three months at Readfield, visited Portland, and preached there a short time, in company with Stephen Hull, and thence passed on to the Conference at Thompson, Conn. Several years had now elapsed since he had visited his home, and he longed to return to its affections and more genial climate. But those were times for great sacrifices as well as great labors; Asbury pointed him to the field white unto the harvest, and reminded him of the fewness of the laborers. Asbury himself was an unparalleled example of self-sacrifice, and his spirit inspired all about him. Mr. Hall decided to tarry. "I have never," he says, "seen one of my relations since 1792, and never shall till I meet them in the eternal world; for I am now in my 79th year, my energies are paralysed, all my faculties, especially my memory, fail fast. I have, you percieve, a trembling hand — it is difficult for me to write." Instead of returning South he was appointed, with his former colleague, George Pickering, to Boston and Needham. Thence he went to Sandwich, on Cape Cod; there God blessed his labors with great success — an extensive reformation took place and seventy persons were gathered in the society. "Blessed be the Lord, O my soul," exclaims the veteran on recalling those times; "this was the good Lord's work, and the beginning of Methodism in that place." In 1797, he was appointed to Martha's Vineyard, and was instrumental in planting Methodism on that Island. The next year Asbury requested him to throw himself into the city of Providence, provide as he could for his support, and, "by the blessing of God, raise up a society." He went thither, opened a school for his subsistence, preached and labored among the people, and formed a class, the beginning of Methodism in that city.

In 1799, he was appointed to Warren and Greenwich Circuit, as colleague with Ezekiel Canfield and Trueman Bishop. In 1800, his appointment was Rhode Island. He visited Newport, "preached four times by day-light, and had a meeting again in the evening. "This," he says, "was the hardest day's work I ever performed before or since, but it was delightful." He had the honor of forming the first Methodist Society of Newport. Moving to and fro with the usual rapidity of the energetic Itinerants of that day, he soon reached New Bedford and introduced Methodism there. "Bro. John Gibson," he writes "came to help me while we raised and unfurled the evangelical standard; though smitten down for a time it still waves there, bless the name of the Lord! May it always there wave till time shall be no more!"

In the Minutes of the next year he is returned on the located list. He visited Maine, however, and labored with Joseph Baker at Camden one year, during which he preached also at Thomastown, Union, Lincoln, Hope and Northport. "We had," he writes, "Daniel Rickow to assist us, and a good revival of religion spread throughout the Circuit. In 1802, he returned to Penobscot River and chose a resting place at Frankfort Mills, where he yet resides, suffering under the infirmities of nearly eighty years, and waiting for the change which shall restore him to the society of his old associates in the ministry. During his Itinerant life he did good battle for the faith; he commenced the important societies at Providence, Newport, and Sandwich, and several on Penobscot River. Since his location he has continued to labor as his health would admit, and has sustained important public responsibilities in the State. In 1830, he was placed upon the supernumerary list of the Maine Conference, he has since been transferred to the list of the superannuated where he yet remains. He concludes a brief narrative of his life with the joyful exclamation, "I have almost finished my journey and heaven is my future home — glory be to God, my Savior, forever and ever, amen!"

Amos G. Thompson was one of the many who came from the region of the Baltimore Conference, to share the early struggles of Lee, on New England. He began his ministerial travels in Somerset Circuit, Md., in 1785. During the next five years he travelled successively Alleghany, Caroline, Md., Fairfax, Va., Lancaster, Va., Redstone, Va., Circuits. The next two years he travelled an extensive District, which included the North Western portion of Virginia and extended to Pittsburg, in Pennsylvania. It is a fact illustrative of the influence which Lee exerted through the Middle Conferences in behalf of the East, that more than one fourth of the preachers on this large District afterwards became loborers in New England.

Mr. Thompson entered New England in 1793, and was appointed to Boston. The two following years he travelled respectively the Needham and New London Circuits, and in 1796 retired into the local ranks. His ardor cooled under the severe privations of the times. On leaving the struggling phalanx of his Itinerant brethren, he settled as a Congregational pastor.

Benjamin Fisler appears in the Itinerant ranks for the first time in 1791, on Cumberland Circuit, in Nova Scotia, where Wm. Black was at that time laying laboriously the foundations of Methodism. The next year, he passed to New Rochelle Circuit, New York. His appointment the present year at Middletown, comprises all his labors in New England. The next two years he spent on Bethel (N. J.) Circuit; in 1796 and 97, he was respestively on Burlington and Salem Circuits, in the same State, and in 1798 located.

John Hill came to New England the present year, from the region of the Baltimore Conference, where he had travelled, since 1788, the following Circuits, viz: Little York, Frederick, Calvert, Severn (all in Maryland,) and Tioga, Pa. On arriving in New England he took charge of the Needham Circuit. In 1794, he was appointed to "New Hampshire," and in 1796 to the Greenwich Circuit, R. I. The next year he also disappears in the local ranks. He afterwards became a Congregationalist, and, in an unfortunate moment of dejection, put an end to his life.

Joseph Lovell commenced his Itinerant labors in 1790, on Newburg (N. Y.) Circuit, as colleague of the noted Benjamin Abbot. The following two years he travelled successively Bristol and Chester Circuits, in Pennsylvania. The next year he came to New England and labored on Tolland Circuit. In 1794, he was on Greenwich Circuit, R. I. He left New England the ensuing year, and was appointed to Burlington, N. J.; the year following he was at Albany; in 1797, on Freehold Circuit, N. J., and in 1798, at Trenton in the same State. We cannot ascertain his appointment for 1799, but the next year hear he is returned among the located.

The record of JASON PERKINS' appointments in the Minutes is a specimen of the perplexing uncertainty of those documents. He appears the present year with the devoted Woorster on Granville Circuit, and also in the list of those received on trial the same year, among whom were Woorster himself, Zadok Priest, Elijah Woolsey, Enoch Mudge, Daniel Ostrander, and other noble names in the history of Methodism in New England, but after this year his name occurs no more among those "who remain on trial," those, "who are admitted into full connection," the "Deacons" or the "Elders," yet with singular incongruity it is attached to appointments during three years, after which it totally disappears without an intimation of how or wherefore, Dr. Bangs' does not mention him in his Alphabetical Catalogue, nor does Lee in his Classification of the Methodist Ministry, from the year 1785 to 1792. The three Circuits which he travelled during 1793–4–5, were respectively Granville, Columbia, and New Rochelle. A melancholly obscuration covers him from our sight, but we trust not forever.

Such is the slight information we have been able to collect respecting those preachers, on the list for New England in 1793, who have not been previously noticed.

# CHAPTER XII.

## INCIDENTS OF 1793–4.

New Circuits — Province of Maine — Lee's Excursions to it — Formation of the First Circuit — The First Society — Success elsewhere — Vexatious Trials — Lee's mode of meeting them — Anecdotes — Thomas Ware — First Printed Attack on Methodism in New England — Roberts' Reply — Rev. Mr. Williams, of Tolland — Devotion and usefulness of the Itinerant Ministry — Asbury again in the East — At Middletown — Hartford — Waltham — Boston — Results of the Year.

THE appointments of the present year show a gain of *five* Circuits. Six New England names appear for the first time in the list; one of these, however, was a substitute for the former title of the same Circuit. Some of the additional Circuits were formed by new arrangements of prior ones, rendered necessary by the progress of the church. *Tolland*, which had previously pertained to the Hartford Circuit, was now made the head quarters of a new one, to which it gave its name, and which extended mostly over new ground. *Granville* Circuit, in western Massachusetts, had been formed, we suppose, by detachments from other Circuits on the Albany District. That of *New London* appears, for the first time, the present year. Lee informs us, in his History of Methodism,[*] that it was formed in the beginning of 1793, and "a preacher continued to travel it from that time till the Conference, when it was taken on the Minutes. It then had fifty members." The Itinerant preachers had labored, more or less, however, in most of the towns comprised in it, before it was formed into a Circuit. He adds the following particulars, "for the satisfaction" of the Methodists in those parts: "The first sermon preached by the Methodists in the city of New London, was on the second day of September, 1789, upwards of three years before the Circuit was formed. The first preached in Windham, was on the 24th of June, and the first in the city of Norwich, was on the 25th of June, 1790.

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[*] Chap. VII.

*Greenwich* Circuit was a detachment from the Providence Circuit of the preceding year, and lay on the west of the Providence River and Narragansett Bay. *Warren* was another, and the chief portion, of the Providence Circuit. Lee states that it included Newport, Bristol, Warren, Cranston, Providence, and "several places in Massachusetts." * "It will," he adds, "no doubt be satisfactory to many of the inhabitants of Rhode Island to know when the Methodists came to that State. The first Methodist sermon was preached in Charlestown, R. I., on the 3d of September, 1789; the first in Newport, on the 30th June, 1790; the first in Bristol, on the 2d July, and the first in Cranston, on the 11th of November, 1791."

The remaining new appointment of this year was the *Province of Maine*, worthily assigned to Lee himself. It then, and for more than a quarter of a century afterwards, pertained to Massachusetts; its settlements were sparse, and mostly on the seaboard or principal rivers. "Few ministers, of any order," remarks his biographer, "had thought fit to brave the difficulties which the climate and state of society presented at that period."* Most of the interior regions were but occasionally favored with the word and ordinances of God. Lee himself refers to Maine, as "an unimproved part of the country," and speaks of the "thinly settled" places, "where the people could seldom hear a sermon of any kind." "At that time," he adds, "there were very few settled ministers in the Province of Maine, except in the old settled parts of the country near the sea shore."† Such was precisely the field for a man of his spirit. He longed to sound the trump of the gospel through the primeval forests and along the mighty rivers of that now noble State; and though he knew no one there to welcome him on his arrival, nor any one elsewhere to give him "a particular account of the place and people," yet, as "it was commonly understood that they were in want of preaching," he took his horse and saddle-bags, and directed his course towards it, not knowing what would befall him there.

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* Chap. vii

He left Lynn on Thursday, Sept. 5th; and on Saturday was at Portsmouth. His former visits had procured him some steadfast friends, who greeted his return; they endeavored to obtain the court-house for him to preach in, but it was refused. The next day (Sabbath) he walked to it, with a few friends, but the authorities still denied him the privilege of preaching in it. They knew not the spirit of the man, however, and only secured him a better hearing by their discourtesy. He coolly ascended to "the step of the door of the court-house, and began." When he commenced, there were but about twelve hearers present, but they soon began to flock together, and swelled to some hundreds before he concluded. They crowded into several adjacent streets, and listened with solemnity and manifest emotion, while he declared to them, with "much freedom," the acceptable year of the Lord.

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* Chap. XIII.

† History of Meth., chap. VIII.

The next day he was "off early," crossed the river, and entered the "Province of Maine." On Tuesday, 10th, he was at Saco.

> "I put up," he says, "at Doctor Fairfield's, and at night in another house, I preached on Acts 13: 41. I had the house much crowded with attentive hearers, and I felt the assistance of the Holy Ghost in preaching to them. Lord make it profitable to many."

His biographer has preserved but brief notices of his first excursion to Maine; it was, however, but a visit of observation; his subsequent and more interesting labors in that new region are more fully detailed, and will afford us some interest in their due place. The following is the outline given in his Memoir, of the remainder of his present journey.

> "From Saco he went to Portland, where, by the kind interference of several persons, Mr. Kellogg's meeting-house was opened for him. From Portland he travelled to Freeport, and preached. Thence he went to Bath, where he preached three times. He then crossed Kennebec River and rode to Newcastle, to Thomaston, to Union, and crossing the Penobscot River, lodged at the house of Abraham Stover, in the town of Penobscot. He then went to a little village called Baggadoore Neck; but finding it would be difficult to travel much further on horseback, and the settlements on the road being very thin, he resolved to return to the town of Penobscot, where he sent out an appointment, and preached on the Sabbath day. He then rode to Major Buck's, in Bucktown. After this he took a route up the river within a few miles of the Indian settlement, and returned down the river to Frankfort. Here the people received him gladly, and strove hard to retain him amongst them; but, although they offered to hire him to come and settle there the ensuing spring, 'it had' (says he) 'no weight with me, for I am no hireling.'
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> "The inhabitants upon the Penobscot, at that time, were principally new settlers; consequently destitute of any regular preaching, and therefore the more thankful for the visit they received from Mr. Lee.
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> "He continued in these settlements, travelling to and fro and preaching, with good hopes that his labor would be blessed of the Lord, until the latter part of October, at which time he returned to Lynn.
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> "In January, 1794, he repeated his visit to the settlements on the Kennebec and Penobscot rivers, and enlarged his borders by preaching in

> many new places. His difficulties were many, but God gave him strength to bear all, with becoming patience and resolution. He succeeded in forming a Circuit in the Province of Maine, which, by the way, is all that can be said of it, for we are not assured that there was a single society of Methodists within its whole bounds."

There was, in fact, no Society formed within its limits, or within the whole Province, until after the ensuing Conference. The first class in Maine was organised at Monmouth about the first of November, 1794.* Mr. Lee has given us, in his History of the Methodists,† a brief sketch of this eastern excursion.

> "I travelled," he says, "through a greater part of that country from September to the end of the year. I went as far as Castine, at the mouth of the Penobscot River; up the river to the upper settlements, which were then just below the Indian settlement called Old-Town; thence I returned by the way of the Twenty-five mile Pond, to Kennebec River; thence up the Sandy River, and back to Hallowell, and thence through to Portland."

By tracing his route on the map, it will be perceived that he surveyed quite thoroughly most of what was then the settled portion of that State, viz: the region of the coast from Portsmouth to Castine, and the interior, between the Kennebec and Penobscot, as far up, and even farther, than what has since become the site of Bangor on the latter, and Waterville on the former.

> "Although," he continues, "I was a perfect stranger to the people, and had to make my own appointments, I preached almost every day, and to crowded assemblies. After viewing the country, I thought the most proper place to form a Circuit was on the Kennebec River. The Circuit was accordingly formed, and called *Readfield.* This was the name of the first Circuit formed by the Methodists in that part of the country; it was about 200 miles from any other which we had in New England. It extended from Hallowell to Sandy River." "It will, no doubt," he adds, "afford some satisfaction to the people to know the exact time when the Methodists first preached among them on that Circuit and in the neighboring towns. On the 13th day of October,

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* Lee's Hist., chap. VIII.

† Ibid.

1793, the first Methodist sermon was preached in Hallowell; on the 15th, in Farmington; on the 17th, in New Sharon; on the 18th, in Mount Vernon; the 19th, Readfield; the 21st, Winthrop; the 22d, Monmouth."

These were all the towns comprised in the *Readfield* Circuit in 1793. Others were added, however, in the beginning of 1794, before the termination of the present ecclesiastical year.

While Lee was thus preparing the way in the wilderness, his colleagues, in other parts of New England, were assiduously cultivating and extending their respective fields of labor. Their success had already begun to appear ominous to the inactive settled clergy of the time. Hitherto they had been considered either fanatical intruders, whose ardor would soon abate, or "a set of broken merchants," who had come up from the South, and being poor, and too indolent to work, had betaken themselves to preaching, as the best mode of spunging from the devout people of New England the means of subsistence,* but who would soon find it convenient to go elsewhere. It was now becoming quite manifest, however, that they were in earnest, and were intrenching themselves in all the land. Demonstrations of hostility were therefore made in many directions. The pulpits denounced them as "wolves in sheep's clothing," the "false prophets who should come in the latter day," "Itinerant pedlars of false doctrine,"† &c. Though formally authorized and ordained by a church which had spread through most of the States, they were not recognized by the magistrates of New England, especially in Connecticut, as regular clergymen, and Mr. Roberts was prosecuted and fined for consecrating the marriage of a couple of his people. Several laymen, whose consciences were too scrupulous or obstinate for the laws which required them to support what they deemed a dead and heretical ministry were thrust into prison or despoiled of their property. Popular violence sometimes disturbed their solemn assemblies.

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* Bangs' Hist., vol. I: b. 3: chap. 2.

† Ibid.

The people of New England were then, even more than at present, addicted to speculative disputation on theological subjects. The doctrines of the new sect were thoroughly canvassed, and as thoroughly carricatured in the pulpit, in the vestry, at the village inn, and at the fire-side. Both its preachers and its people were incessantly harrassed with assaults about "*principles.*" The former had to contend with additional vexations respecting their "education" and rejection of "notes" in the pulpit. Their unquestionable and effective eloquence was a sufficient vindication of them in the latter respect — their tact, and sometimes their wit, in the former. The preacher, deacon, and lawyer, generally formed, in those days, a trio of leadership in the village society of New England. The former usually assailed the new comers with distant dignity from the pulpit, the deacon pursued them with rigorous questions of orthodoxy to their meetings and social circles, and the lawyer — strictly conformed then, as now, to the strongest local influence, followed, — to ply with his logic, the deacon's metaphysics. The former two Mr. Lee generally rebutted by apt quotations of the Scriptures; with the latter he felt himself at liberty, from the impression he had of their less commendable motives, to use the weapon of his native and cutting satire. Oftentimes did he turn upon them the ridicule of large companies of bystanders, and compel them to shrink back abashed at the unexpected reaction of their own impertinence.

On a certain occasion, one of them boldly attempted to prove Mr. Lee's ignorance in presence of a group of spectators, by addressing him in Latin. Lee, who was always prompt at repartee, responded to him in German, of which the young lawyer and the bystanders, who were anxiously listening to the conversation, knew as little as they did of the tongue of Timbuctoo. "There," said one of the group, "he has answered you in Hebrew, and therefore he must be a learned man." The lawyer retired in silence, with a sullen countenance, and the literary qualifications of the preacher were admitted and admired.

Dr. Thomas Sargent, (himself one of the New England pioneers,) has assured us that the current anecdote of the Methodist preacher's reply to two lawyers, on extemporary preaching, actually occurred with Jesse Lee. The shrewd Itinerant had been preaching in a town during the session of the court, and had dealt rather faithfully with the lawyers, two of whom were disposed to make themselves merry at his expense. The day on which the court adjourned he left the place for another appointment. While riding on his way, he perceived the two gentlemen hastening after him on horseback, with evident expectations of amusement. They entered into conversation with him on extemporaneous speaking. "Don't you often make mistakes?" said one of them. "Yes, sir," was the laconic reply. "Well, what do you do with them? — Let them go?" "Sometimes I do," replied the preacher, drily; "if they are very important, I correct them; if not, or if they express the truth, though differently from what I designed, why, I often let them go. For instance, if in preaching, I should wish to quote the text which says, 'the devil is a liar, and the father of it,' and should happen to misquote it, and say he was a '*lawyer*,' &c., why, it is so near the truth, I should probably let it pass." The gentlemen of the bar looked at each other, and were soon in advance, hastening on their way.*

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* See Sketches and Incidents, vol. I.

The good Thomas Ware — a man whose memory is revered by all who knew him — was this year, as we have seen, on a District which comprehended several New England appointments. He refers to the species of trials we have described, as frequent in the eastern States, at that time. "It was common," he remarks, "for the Methodist preachers, when they preached in new places, and often in their regular appointments, to be attacked by some disputant on the subject of doctrines, sometimes by ministers, but more frequently by students in divinity or loquacious and controversial laymen. And so far as my experience on this District extended, I discovered much rancor and bitterness mingled with these disputes. I am obliged to say that, during the three years of my labors in this section, I found not so much as one friendly clergyman professing the doctrines opposed to Methodism. There may have been such; but all with whom I conversed, or whose sentiments I knew, were violent in their opposition to us; and the rough manner in which I was usually treated by them, rendered me unwilling to come in contact with them. But when it so happened that we must try our strength, I found no difficulty in defending the cause I had espoused; for a foe despised has a great advantage. And when a man has a system which is clearly Scriptural, he needs only a little plain common sense and self-possession to maintain his ground, though a host of learned theologians should unite against him. In Granville and Pittsfield, the current of opposition was very strong against us. In these parts religious societies were systematically organized, and sustained by law. With churches in the centre of their towns and parishes, they prided themselves on having a learned, competent ministry, whom they supported by a tax upon the people. But with all their boast of learning and competency, I found many of the clergy in these parts so far from being really great men, that I soon lost all fear of them." *

It was during the period under review that the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Tolland, who had become alarmed at the rapid spread of the Methodists around him, published a sermon against them, fully exemplifying the hostile spirit with which they were then treated. It was the first attack made upon them from the press, and was considered by the infant church a serious event in their yet uncertain history. To us it is interesting, at least as an indication of the times, and the first in a series of assaults from pamphleteers, which have been most useful provocatives of our success. It was addressed to his people, on the Fast Day, with a degree of emphasis quite unusual in his preaching, and produced a profound sensation among them.† The discourse was accompanied in print by a letter from Dr. Huntington, of Coventry; both documents were most unscrupulous in their charges, and uncharitable in their spirit. The laborious zeal and self-sacrificing devotion of the new preachers were construed into hypocrisy.

> "There may be little sincerity," said Mr. Williams, "where there is a great share of zeal. When a new sect has arisen in the Christian church, the leaders, especially, have made high pretensions to eminent society and love for precious souls. The Christians in the church of Corinth and Achaia were practised upon by the same sort of teachers. St. Paul says they are false apostles, deceitful, worthless, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers, also, be transformed into the ministers of righteousness — corrupt teachers, beguiling unstable souls, creeping into houses and leading captive silly women, laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts," &c. ‡

Such were some of the generous allusions of Mr. Williams to

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* Memoir, chap. 8.

† Letter of Mr. Joseph Howard, of Tolland, who was present at the time.

‡ Apud Dr. Roberts' "Strictures" on this Sermon.

the indefatigable and disinterested men of the first New England ministry. He stoutly denounces the pretension of a divine call to the ministry — considers it a "tempting of heaven to give" the pretender "up to delusion," and further remarks, "These are no new things, — multitudes have come forth as preachers on this ground, within a number of years past, in these New England churches, whom you believe were deceived themselves, or aimed to deceive others."

Dr. Huntington's appended letter was equally severe. "The modern Methodist teachers," he asserts, "are men of Machiavellian principles, and do, without any scruples, make use of truth and deceit promiscuously, as they judge will most promote the interest of their party." He speaks of their "heretical doctrines," and of Wesley as "a flaming enthusiast," given to "wild singularities," among which he enumerates the "institution of classes and class-meetings."

Such are but specimens of the first printed attack on the New England Methodists. It was considered appropriate to the humble and deprecating devotions of the Fast Day, and was published "with the unanimous approbation of the Association, and at their cordial request." *

Some apprehensions spread, among the "little flock," at the appearance of this deliberate and formal opposition. It was soon allayed, however. Dr. Roberts, Presiding Elder that year of the District which included Tolland, entered the lists against the two pugnacious divines, with such ability and satirical power, as turned the current of public opinion, to a considerable extent, against them, and effectually disposed them to abandon the controversy.† Dr. Roberts had

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* Dr. Huntington's Letter.

† Dr. Roberts' reply was entitled, "Strictures on a Sermon delivered by Mr. Nathan Williams, A. M., in Tolland, on the Public Fast, April 17th, 1793, with some observations on Dr. Huntington's Letter, annexed to said Sermon, in a Letter by Geo. Roberts.

an important advantage over the assailants in the tendencies of the popular mind at that time against the compulsory support of the church, by taxation. Being thoroughly republican himself, and a hearty lover of the institutions of his country, he often speaks out indignantly on the subject.*

> "How," he exclaims, "can you expect to be prospered by heaven in that which has been, and still is productive of so much fraud, as the spoiling of goods for its support? What better is it, in its own nature, than robbery, to seize the property of people to support a ministry they do not esteem, nor desire to hear?"†

He gives the following estimate of the New England Congregational church of that day:—

> "I believe the churches were made up of members unawakened and unconverted, with a few exceptions: secondly, it followed as a natural consequence, that the wicked bore rule: thirdly, they were State establishments; and a church established by law, is not a church of Christ, but of anti-christ: fourthly, the ministers made a trade of the gospel, a few excepted; and these few exceptions were not far behind the others, because they upheld or countenanced them in it: fifthly, they sent out unconverted men, or it was their opinion, unconverted men had a right to preach.
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> "There is a difference between yours and the primitive church: the primitive church was a spiritual church, established by the authority of Christ; but is your church any thing more than a carnal church, established by the civil law? The apostles received nothing for their support from those who were not of their church; but you take from all who are within your unscriptural parish lines that the law will allow you to take from. The apostles took what they received, not by constraint, but as a free gift; i. e. they did not untie the purse strings of the brethren and widows, under the sanction of the civil law as you do."‡

An estimate too manifestly correct, not to form a sufficient justification for the "intrusion" of these zealous evangelists. He was never known to be so much affected in any discourse

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* A Baptist had actually been laying in the prison at Tolland, about this time, for refusing to pay the "minister's rate," in a church he could not approve. Roberts avails himself of the fact.

† Strictures, p. 7. ‡ Ibid, pp. 5 and 11.

"It is happy for us," exclaims Roberts, "we live after the GLORIOUS REVOLUTION. Now national establishments, tyrants, kings, and priests, bow under the well-formed *Federal Constitution.* Had we appeared here in former days, we might have been treated as kindly as the Quakers and witches were." *

As a specimen of the severity of both parties, and the shrewd humor with which Roberts repulsed the assailants, we give a single paragraph more : —

"The doctor observes, our style is not material, we have assumed different names in the eras of time, with some little alterations, but have been the same for substance in every age. I hope, sir, when you are disposed to give the world this ready information, you will first read our books, and gain a little more information yourself; by this means you will save yourself some credit, gain a little more knowledge, and not be under the necessity of asserting things against us, as charges, that only exist in your own imagination. The doctor then observes, 'the apostles were troubled with the same sort of people, and St. Paul was more severe than you (Mr. Williams) are. He calls them *dogs*, evil workers, and the concision, i. e. cutters to pieces — the sacred writers speak of them as raging waves of the sea — *wandering stars*, on account of pretending to much light, and wandering about, or roving about from place to place,' and many similar descriptions. But as I have principally answered these charges, I have only to observe, St. Paul was a great Methodist, if every minister that travels, or itinerates to preach the gospel is such. I am sure the apostles made as much disturbance in the standing churches as the Methodists do. The doctors and high priests, were as much disturbed as they are now with us; and Peter was so boisterous a Methodist preacher, that his enemies thought he was filled with new wine, and you may be sure they made the old standing churches, established by the civil law, tremble to their very foundations. St. Peter pretended to so much light, that when they charged him with being drunk, he told them it was the Holy Ghost they were filled with. Perhaps the curious reader may wonder why the people of the Jews were so disturbed, and why Mr. Williams, and the Doctor are so uneasy? Why, dear reader, it is all from one source, they cried out against the apostles 'if we let these men alone, they will fill the whole world with their doctrine. The Romans will come and take away our place and nation.' All denominations were afraid of such Methodistical heretics. Their craft was in danger by which they gained their wealth. And you must know further, that the priests had become so lazy, and these *Methodistical strangers*, and *transient itinerating preachers*, were so industrious, that they found it would never do; for the new sect would run from parish to parish, and from town to town, and did not care much for synagogues, or meeting-houses; they would collect the people in the market places, the school-houses and upper rooms, and preach perhaps every day, ofttimes in the evenings, and sometimes would preach and pray until twelve o'clock at night. This is the very case with the Methodistical heretics; and Mr. Williams and the Doctor have lost a considerable number of their sheep, which makes wool for shearing scarce with them, or they are obliged to shear the sheep that are left behind, so closely that many of them are cut to the skin, have not enough left to keep them warm, and so are not able to give their lambs suck. This the doctor has had to vex him as well as Mr. Williams. And since they published the sermon and letter, the Doctor sent out his servant to shear his sheep again, but many of them broke out of the fold and took shelter with us, and I expect necessity will drive them all away in time."

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* Strictures — p. 28.

We have referred to this polemical rencontre as an illustration of the times. It was unfortunately conducted on both sides. Roberts was scathingly severe in some of his passages — a keenness being given to their edge by the shrewdness of his satire. The Congregational combatants, while they could not approach him in satirical force, were even more severe with their stultified abuse. Much must be pardoned to both parties, in consideration of the times. If in these days of improved sentiments and laws, our controversies were proportionately meliorated, we might with more propriety rebuke the errors of our fathers.

Mr. Williams yielded, we charitably suppose, to a temporary feeling, not in harmony with his habitual disposition. At their first arrival, the Methodist preachers were hospitably received at his house and admitted to his pulpit. "He received them very cordially," writes a correspondent, "and treated them kindly, until there began to be a reformation, and classes were formed; then an alarm was raised — the preachers were afterwards treated by the Doctor with indifference and inattention, and finally with such neglect that they ceased to visit him — and then appeared his sermon.

he had delivered, or to produce so much apparent feeling among his church."[*] Age and better information relieved, however, the good old Pastor's fears, and it is affecting to learn that "before he died he welcomed his Methodist brethren to hold prayer-meetings with him in his own house."[†] He passed into the grave, grateful for the prayers and Christian regards of those whom he once, honestly, no doubt, opposed as dangerous heretics.

The assailed Itinerants had a better and more effectual mode of repelling attacks; their devoted lives and untiring labors for the salvation of the people stopped the mouths and confounded the hostility of their opponents. They moved through all the region of the "Association" which "cordially requested" the publication and aided the circulation of this pamphlet, like "flames of fire," spreading holiness in their course, and raising up in the persons of many who were before considered "reprobates," "living Epistles" of their ministry, which were read of all men.

> "It is very pleasing," says a veteran Methodist, who lived in Tolland in that day of trial, "It is very pleasing to me now to reflect on those times, the beginning of illumination to my darkened mind. I had before that supposed that there was such a thing as religion, and that it was indispensable for the aged and dying, but I had no idea of its real excellence, until I saw it exemplified in the spirit and lives of the Methodist preachers. My father's house was a home for them; there they met and consulted together when they had a day of leisure, while on the Circuit, though such a day did not occur more than once in two weeks, and often not more than once a month. Those were times when they preached, at least, once a day, besides riding many miles. Tolland was about the centre of the Circuit. The chapel was built on my father's land, perhaps twenty rods from our dwelling. Two of my brothers, a sister, and, I think, my mother, all became members of the church in those troubled times. Among the preachers whom I recollect, were Lee, Rainor, Smith, Roberts, Pickering, Mudge, Joshua Hall, Mills, Brush, Hope Hull, Swain, &c. Amidst all the

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[*] Letter to the Mr. Writer, from Joseph Howard, of Tolland.

[†] Ibid.

opposition of those days, Methodism flourished, and for ten years after, with a short interruption, I think, much more than in this day, notwithstanding all later improvements. I like to look back on those times, and I expect to rejoice for ever that it was my lot to become acquainted with Methodism in early life. I consider it the chief instrument in the hands of God of my salvation, and the most happy seasons of my life; and I hope one day to join those who have gone before me in celebrating the praises of my Redeemer, forever."*

Thus the ecclesiastical years of 1793–4 had nearly passed, in labors, trials and triumphs; meanwhile, as the period for the next Conference approached, the great apostle of American Methodism, after having traversed the continent, re-entered New England. He was still feeble with disease, and wearied with unremitted labors, but he pressed on, as before, journeying and preaching daily.

He passed into Connecticut on Thursday, 10th July, 1794. On the 12th he reached Middletown, and preached with "some life," in the afternoon, at the Separatist chapel. The following day was the Sabbath — "a great day," he says, — and notwithstanding his fatigues and feebleness, he preached twice, and held a Love Feast with the young church of the town.

He was away again the next morning, and preached at Hartford, in Strong's Congregational church. "I roared out wonderfully," he writes, "on Matt. 11 : 28 – 30 : 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,' &c. Next day we came five miles to Spencer's, in Hartford, where we have a neat house, forty by thirty-four feet. Thence I rode fifteen miles to Coventry, where I had a large congregation, and a comfortable meeting."

Thirty-three miles' ride to Pomfret, through "heat, dust and rocks," was the task of the ensuing day. Still he paused not for repose. On Friday, 18th, he reached Needham, but "was nearly spent" by the journey. The next day he passed to Waltham, where he tarried over the Sabbath, amidst warm-hearts and hospitable attentions, in the mansion of Mr. Bemis, so familiarly known since to our preachers as the family residence of Rev. Geo. Pickering. On Saturday he held a quarterly meeting. "At three o'clock," he writes, "I gave them a discourse on *the little flock*, to comfort the affrighted sheep. Sabbath day, we had love-feast at eight o'clock, sermon at half-past ten o'clock, and again in the afternoon: there was some life in the love-feast, and sacrament also.

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* Letter of Mr. Joseph Howard, of Tolland.

On Monday he entered Boston, "unwell in body, and with a heavy heart." The times had changed somewhat in the city since his previous visit. A home could now be found by the tired evangelist, and the little company of believers had found a place, however humble, for the ark of the Lord. "We have," he writes, "a very agreeable lodging in this town: but have to preach, as did our Lord, in an upper room. We had a prayer-meeting, and the Lord was present to bless us."

With such continual travelling and daily preaching, not only in New England, but through the whole land, and the whole year, we do not wonder that he exclaims, "Labor and affliction of body and mind, make my poor heart sad, and my spirits sink;" yet he adds, with steadfast faith, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul—and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; thou shalt yet praise him."

He tarried in Boston two days. "Tuesday, 22d," he says, "I took up my cross and preached in a large room, which was full enough, and warm enough. I stood over the street; the boys and Jack-tars made a noise, but mine was loudest; there was fire in the smoke; some I think, felt the word, and *we shall yet have a work in Boston*. My talk was strange and true to some."

This "large room" was a "hired chamber in the house of Mr. John Ruddock, opposite Clark's ship-yard, Ship street, a building which, from its situation and inhabitants, received the name of 'The College.' The Society meetings were frequently surrounded with noises of every kind." * On Wednesday the Bishop went to Lynn, where he continued till Monday, conducting the business of the Conference.

Thus closed, in the latter part of July, the ecclesiastical year, 1793–4. It had been a time of adversity and declension to the general church; severe trials had also afflicted the small Itinerant band in New England. They were hedged in on every side by a decayed church, whose chief remaining vigor consisted in its pertinacity for its antiquated polemics and its intolerance towards dissentient sects; they had reached, too, a degree of advancement, where more than at any earlier period of their history, the sectarian jealousy of the established churches became excited and alarmed; but they surmounted all impediments, and made good progress. Their Circuits were extended on all sides; eighteen were reported at the next Conference — a gain of more than one fourth on the number of the preceding year. Lee had surveyed extensively the wilderness of Maine, and was now on his way to the Conference, to solicit a laborer for that vast field, carrying with him a schedule of appointments, which, after personal inspection, he had definitively arranged into a Circuit that extended along the Kennebec, quite into the interior of the Province. New Hampshire and Vermont were also "stretching out their hands," and the Itinerant corps resolved to extend its lines into those remoter regions, at the approaching Conference. Thus the three re-

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* MS. Sketch of the History of Methodism in Boston, by Col. Binney, in the Records of the church for 1800.

maining sections of New England were about to be regularly occupied by them.

While the aggregate membership of the church had decreased during the year more than 2000, the local membership in New England had advanced from 1739 to 2039 — a small addition when compared with the progress of later years, but large for those earlier days of trial and struggle.

These additions were generally distributed among the young societies. Boston reported 49, a gain of 8 on the returns of the preceding year; Needham 76, a gain of 26; Lynn 149, a loss of 17; Greenwich 30, a gain of 14; Warren 127, a gain of 69; New London 219, a gain of 169, Middletown 187, a gain of 15; Litchfield 195, a gain of 11; Tolland appears, for the first time in the returns, with 334, but as it was chiefly a reorganization of the Hartford Circuit, we cannot determine precisely what was its gain or loss; Granville reports 148, a gain of 58; Pittsfield 305, a loss of 25; Fairfield 220, a loss of 21. These additions, or diminutions, were often effected by alterations of the Circuits, which frequently occurred in those days.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## EARLY METHODIST CHURCHES IN NEW ENGLAND.

The First Society formed by Lee in New England — His Visits to the town of Stratford — Trials — Asbury's description of a Scene in the Town-house — Subsequent Prosperity — Formation of the Second Class — The oldest Methodist Layman of New England and his Family — The Church at Redding — First Methodist Chapel in New England — Lee's Visits to Easton — The Church there — Norwalk.

About five years had now elapsed since the arrival of Lee in New England. The history of Methodism in the East, during this its dawning period, is mostly and necessarily, the biographical annals of its pioneer ministry. They were themselves the only Methodists within its limits, when they entered them, and for several years their extentive plans and gigantic labors constitute the only prominent facts of our history.

Meanwhile, they were laying, unostentatiously, but substantially, the foundations of our cause, by the formation of several societies, which, though at first composed of few members, without chapels or apparent means of providing them in the future, and distinguished before the public mind by imputations of heresy, fanaticism and contempt, were, nevertheless, the first in a series that has since extended into nearly every city, town and village of New England, spreading over its surface a ripe harvest of piety. Let us leave the evangelical laborers to refresh themselves in the interviews and deliberations of the Conference of 1794, while we review somewhat, the five years' labors just closed, in the history of the principal societies which they had thus far established.

The *first Methodist society established by Lee in New England* was formed in STRATFIELD, a parish of the town of Stratford, near Bridgeport, in a small place called "Mutton Lane," on the 26th of September, 1789. Three "elect ladies" composed it, who have all gone to the church triumphant.

Mr. Lee first visited the town, on July 3d, 1789. He was entertained by a liberal minded Deacon, by the name of Hawley, who opened his house for the preaching of the Itinerant stranger. The latter says it was filled, and that he had great satisfaction in addressing the people, "some of whom were melted into tears." "I felt myself," he adds, "transported with joy," and he predicts that God would do "great things for the neighborhood." He found here "about a dozen that met every week, for the purpose of conversing on the subject of religion, and of spending some time in prayer." Even these Christian inquirers were, however, soon disaffected by the charges of heresy which were circulated against the new sect. In about six weeks he visited them again, and observed that though some "heard with watery eyes," yet others who were very polite to him before, now took no notice of him, and "no one invited him to his house." "I hope," adds the courageous Itinerant, "God will soon revive his work in this place, for the devil begins to roar."

His next visit was on the 25th of September. He preached in the evening, and afterwards spoke personally to about twenty persons, in "a kind of class-meeting." The next day he established his first society in New England. The house in which it was formed is still regarded by the Methodists of Stratford, with affectionate interest. The little class of three "remained alone for some months," he remarks, "before any one else united with them."* Their names were Ruth Hall, Mary Hall, (afterwards Mrs. Wells,) sisters, and Ruth Wells, (afterwards Mrs. Risley.) The first two died in the same house in Stratfield, in which they were born, and where Lee made his early home in the place. Mary died, September 11th, 1827, in the sixty-ninth year of her age. Ruth died, August 5th, 1829, in the seventy-fourth year of her age. Mrs. Risley died in Fairfield, a mile or two distant from the place where the others ascended to heaven. The three devoted women thus honorably distinguished, lived the life and died the death of the righteous. As Christians and as Methodists, they were steadfast, unmovable, and always, through evil report and good report, abounding in the work of the Lord. Their end was peaceful and full of hope, and that of Mrs. Wells remarkably triumphant.† They have, doubtless, joined "the innumerable company" in "the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven," but their memory will ever be fragrant as sweet incense around our altars.

It was not long before Mr. Lee procured the use of the town-house, in the principal village, for preaching. Large assemblies listened to him there with the deepest interest. On one of these occasions, he was invited home by Mr. Peck, whose house became his resting place, and many of whose family have since been honored members of the church in Stratford. The society gradually strengthened. On the 19th of May,

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* History of Methodism, 1789.

† Letter from Rev. H. Husted to the Writer.

1790, Lee and Daniel Smith visited Capt. Peck, and formed, in his house, a second class. It consisted of but two members. Their names were John Peck and Margaret Plumb, (afterwards Mrs. Beardsley.) The latter was an eminent Christian, adorning, through a long life, the doctrine of God her Savior, in all things. She died in Fairfield, in the eighty-third year of her age, with the triumphant words "King Jesus," on her lips. Capt. John Peck, through a protracted life, walked worthy of the gospel, was an upright man and a devoted Christian. He lived to be over eighty years of age, and died in the State of New York, in what was formerly known as the "Black River region." He left a most satisfactory evidence that he had not followed a cunningly devised fable.*

But as the little flock grew in importance, it attracted hostility. When Asbury visited the town in 1791, a vote was passed, as we have seen, to close the town-house against the new sect, and while he preached in it for the last time, "some smiled, some laughed, some swore, some talked, some prayed, some wept." "Had it been a house of our own," he adds, "I should not have been surprised had the windows been broken." He met the class the same day, and found "some gracious souls" there. He states the number of the society to be twenty at the time.

Better days have passed over the struggling church. "At Stratford," says a Presiding Elder of the District which includes it, "where Mr. Lee bestowed considerable labor, (and where he was kindly entertained by Mr. Peck, of whose family we might make honorable mention, and many of whom are now excellent members of our church,) has the good seed sprung up, and brought forth much good fruit. There we have a meeting-house, and a large, flourishing society."[*] The first chapel was erected in 1810, and rebuilt in 1839. It has become an efficient station, and now numbers two hundred members. The society has ever been, and continues to be, much united. "Take it as a whole," says its present pastor, "I have never known it surpassed for Christian character." Many of its older and most influential members have gone, within a few years, triumphantly to heaven; but they have left upon the church the permanent and hallowed impression of their godly example.

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* Letter from Rev. Mr. Husted to the Writer.

The *second class formed by Lee in New England*, was commenced in REDDING, CONN., December 28th, 1789, and consisted of but one male and one female member — Mr. Aaron Sandford, and Mrs. Hawley, his wife's mother. Mr. Sandford has, therefore, the peculiar distinction of being the first layman of the Methodist societies founded by Lee in New England.[†] His hospitable roof has sheltered the way-worn Itinerant for more than fifty years. "Here," says one who knows, "the Itinerant has always found a friend and a home; here the Christian brother has always found a kindly reception, and a resting-place."[‡] "He has lived," says the same writer, "to see the work of God spread all around him, far and wide, beyond his most enlarged expectations. He has had ten children, nine of whom have been married; and he has had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing them *all* converted to God, and joined to the same church with himself. Three of his children have died in the faith; two of his sons, with himself, are local preachers. He has about a dozen grand-children, who are members of the same church, and one of them is now actively engaged in the Itinerant ministry."

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[*] Article in the Ch. Ad. and Journal, Nov. 23, 1832, by Rev. Heman Bangs.

[†] Mr. Sandford was also the first class leader, first steward, and first local preacher in the new societies formed by Lee.

[‡] Article in the Ch. Ad. and Journal, Nov. 23, 1832, by Rev. Heman Bangs.

The Half-Way Covenant, as it was called, was in vogue at that time in Connecticut. Persons not members of the church subscribed to it, in order to procure baptism for their children. Mr. Sandford had signed this Covenant. No sooner had he become a member of the Methodist class, than he was summoned before a parish church-meeting, without information of the cause. On arriving, he was accused of breaking the Covenant. He replied that his subscription to it was made in the time of his spiritual ignorance, and that he did not deem himself bound by it now, since God had enlightened his understanding, and shown him the way in which he should walk. With humble boldness, he exhorted all to seek for a more entire consecration to God, and retired from among them. He was steadfast to his profession, and "in about eleven months, two more were added to their number, viz., Samuel S. Smith, (a lawyer,) and Mr. Sandford's wife." Both have gone to their reward. "From this time," says the same writer, "the good work contiuned to spread in the land, amidst much opposition. They dwelt like Moses' bush, in the midst of the fire, but were not consumed; and like the children of Israel in the midst of Egyptian bondage, they continued to multiply and increase. Mr. Sandford's house became one of the first homes of the Methodist preachers in New England, and the general cry was 'he will be ruined; they will eat him out of house and home.' But it is worthy of record what God has done for him, as for many other old brethren who first embarked in the cause of Methodism in New England. Mr. S. has lived to prove the prophecy respecting poverty and ruin false. I stated above, that he has seen all his children happily converted to God, and become members of the same church with himself; I will now add, that he has lived also to see them all comfortably settled in the world. God has blessed him ‘with the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth.’ I suppose Mr. S., his eldest son, and one of his sons-in-law, are the three wealthiest men in the town of Redding.”

From its origin, the church at Redding has continued to prosper. At the Conference in 1837, it became a Station, under the pastoral care of Rev. J. Crawford. During the summer and fall of this year a new and commodious house of worship was erected, beautifully located, and within a few feet of the very spot where Mr. Lee preached his first sermon in the village. In connection with the dedication, and during the following winter, there was a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many were converted to God, and received into the church. There was also considerable revival under the ministry of Rev. D. Smith, in the fall of 1842. Other seasons of refreshing have been enjoyed, and additions have been made to the church, from time to time, so that, exclusive of deaths and removals, it now numbers two hundred and twenty-eight members. “We have,” says the present pastor, “a very good congregation, a flourishing Sabbath school, and an excellent choir. There is quite a good parsonage, the church has been newly painted, inside and out, is free from debt, the seats are free, and men and women sit apart, as in former days. The preachers are well supported, a commendable liberality is exercised towards our benevolent institutions, and we are now looking with prayerful interest for further prosperity. In connection with this charge, we have a society of about fifty members, at what is called Long Ridge, four and a half miles north-west, where, in 1840, a small but neat and elegant church was erected. We give them one sermon in four weeks; the intermediate time is supplied by the local preacher. ‘Father Sandford’ is yet living, in the ninetieth year of his age. He retains his faculties remarkably well, except that of hearing. He continues full of faith and hope, and rejoices in hope of the coming of the Lord."*

EASTON, CONN., (formerly *Weston*,) eight or ten miles from Redding, is distinguished as the locality of the society which erected the *first Methodist Chapel in New England*, though the building itself was located a little beyond the boundary line of the town, "mostly in what is now Turnbull, about one fourth of a mile north from its south west corner, and the same distance from the north-west corner of the town of Bridgewater."†

Mr. Lee preached in the town the first time, on the 25th of September, 1797. His text was, Matthew 22: 14:—"Many are called, but few chosen."

> "I had," he says, "a very large congregation; the house and yard were filled. I felt much liberty in speaking, and continued just two hours from the time I began. The people were affected under the word. I labored to prove that all men were called to leave their sins, and that power was given, with that call, to obey it; and that man was called before he was chosen. I had a Congregational minister sitting just before me, and a Baptist minister close to my left hand, and while I was drawing the bow at a venture, and letting the arrows of truth fly, I found the ministers were greatly frightened at the noise of them, or else wounded by their barbed points, for they would turn and twist, and writhe, during the discourse, which proved that their feelings were not of the most pleasant kind. When I was done, the Baptist minister spoke to me, and said, if he took my ideas, either he or I was in some very great errors, &c. An aged man told him he thought it was very ill usage, to speak in that manner before the people, for he believed that the people were well satisfied with what they had heard, and his speaking might prevent them from being benefitted; that if he had any fault to find with the discourse, he should have taken me out and told me privately wherein I was wrong. The preacher undertook to speak a little more, but another old man began, and they soon silenced him. The other minister set off, and when he got to the door he turned round and said, 'he should set himself in order against the next Sabbath day, to expose the errors which his people had heard that day.'

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* Letter from Rev. J. D. Marshall to the Writer.

† Letters of Rev. Messrs. Husted and Perry to the Writer.

> The hornet's nest is stirred up, and if they sting or persecute me, I must bear it as they bore the arrows; but if I am shielded, they cannot hurt me."

The good people of Easton, notwithstanding the clerical outcry of heresy, stood up firmly for the new doctrines, for they were the bread of life to their hungering spirits. In about three months Lee preached to them again, in the house of David Olds.

> "I preached," he says, "on Acts 17 : 30 : — 'And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.' I insisted much on the willingness of God to save the world; and that he never commanded any man to do what he could not do. The Lord was with us, of a truth. Several hundreds were together; the house was large, but scarcely sufficient to hold the people, and some of them stood outside, with their hats off, and the snow falling on them, yet they seemed contented to hear the word. Most part of the assembly were very solemn, and many heard with tears in their eyes. Surely the Lord will not let his word fall to the ground or return void. In this neighborhood, there are many real friends to the Methodists; and a little below they are engaged in building a preaching house for us, without consulting me on the subject. O what a mercy it is that God gives such a preacher as I am favor in the eyes of so many people in this part of the world."

This church was erected with as much zeal, if not as much despatch, as was that at Lynn — the first in Massachusetts. "It was built," says the writer in the Advocate and Journal, from whom we have quoted, "in quite a novel way, as I was informed by one of our old members, (not then a member,) who helped to do the work. Mr. Lee said one day to the congregation, after preaching, (I believe there was no society at the time,) that if they had a meeting-house, they should have Sunday preaching. They took the hint. One gave timber; some took their oxen and drew it to the spot; some went to scoring and some to hewing the timber, and they framed, raised, and finished it about in the same way, without much concert or plan; but any way, they soon had a house, which they called '*Lee's Chapel*,' where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences." Thus rose the first Methodist Chapel in New England.

"The Lord," says this writer, "has done wonders for Weston." The first chapel became, in time, too strait for their numbers. In 1813 it was superseded by a new and much larger edifice located within the town of Easton. It was dedicated by Rev. Dr. Bangs, with a sermon on Hag. 2: 7: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former," &c. Easton is now one among a numerous series of prosperous stations into which the first Circuit of Mr. Lee has been divided and subdivided, as the increase and efficiency of its churches rendered prudent. The membership at Easton is at present 220.*

NORWALK, CONN., is noted in our history as the *place where Lee first preached in New England.* On the 17th of June, 1789, he took his stand, as we have seen, under an apple tree on the public road, a short distance north of the bridge, or centre of the town, and after singing and prayer, proclaimed to about twenty hearers, "Ye must be born again." Thus did Methodism commence its mission in New England. He felt "happy for so comfortable a place," and left the town for other labors, expressing the anticipation that he should "yet have in it a place where he might lay his head." He had but few opportunities of revisiting it, before the arrival of his first fellow laborers determined him to direct his travels to the eastward, but his successors in Connecticut nurtured the good seed which he sowed on the highway.

The first class was formed about two miles from the village, near the Darien line, at what time cannot be precisely ascertained. It was probably in 1790. The oldest record of the church is a "class paper," containing *ten* names; it is but half of a letter sheet. "The members of this class," writes the present pastor of the church, "have all gone. Sweet be their sleep, and precious be their memory."*

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* Minutes, 1846.

We give, from the same authority, the following sketch of the later history of the church:

*Absolom Day*, a young man who had been converted among the Methodists in New York, moved into South Norwalk, about a mile from the upper village, in 1791 or 1792. He married a young lady of the place, in February, 1793, and, in May following, commenced house-keeping. He immediately invited the preachers to his home, which, henceforth, became a "church," and preaching, once a fortnight, was established there. A number of persons were awakened and converted; and the old class having been removed to this place, their number was quite respectable. But trials awaited them. The society, after a few years, began to wane, and in 1801 the preachers had given out their last appoint, for the village, designing to bestow their labors upon other fields. *Isaac Candee* came to fill the appointment, and under his first sermon *six* persons were awakened. A general interest was now excited on the subject of religion. A gracious revival followed, and the society was at once renewed in numbers and influence.

Mr. Day's house being too small to accommodate the people who now attended Methodist preaching, they resorted to a school house near by. They were, however, soon deprived of this accommodation, by the Congregationalists, and left to provide for themselves as best they could.

Bishop Asbury, in his visits to New England, was accustomed to pass through this place, and put up with Mr. Day. On one of these visits he addressed him as follows: "Br. Day, you must build a house for the Lord." He replied that it was impossible for him to do it. "But," said the Bishop, you *must*." He then gave him a pocket book, which he desired him to keep as a memento, and handed him *ten dollars* towards building a church. This money Mr. Day tried many times after to persuade the Bishop to take back, but in vain.

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* Letter of Rev. W. C. Hoyt to the Writer.

In 1816, the society laid the foundation of a large and commodious house of worship, on the north verge of the South village. In this church hundreds of souls have been converted. In 1843, the old church was taken down, and a new one erected in its place. The present building is a beautiful edifice, one of the best in Fairfield county, and the present membership about 250. In this church, on a pleasant Sabbath, a large and attentive congregation may be seen listening to the word of life.

Such are a few of the churches organized at this early date in Fairfield county, Conn. Of the general success of our cause in that section of New England, a recent publication speaks as follows:

"The success of Methodism in this county is as astonishing to ourselves as it is mysterious to others. When we consider the former set and uniform opposition with which it had to contend — opposition arising from *ignorance*, *prejudice*, and *interest* — and look at its present temporal and spiritual prosperity, we exclaim with wonder and admiration, 'What hath God wrought?' 'The Lord gave the word, and great was the company of those that published it.' Beautiful and commodious churches have sprung up, as if by magic, in almost, if not quite, every town of the country; and in no country sections of our Conference are good parsonages so frequently to be met with. Our congregations, for the most part, are large and respectable. In the various philanthropic and benevolent enterprises of the day, our members are warmly engaged. The preachers and people still believe in the old doctrines of Methodism — *repentance*, *faith*, *holiness*, and the crowning glory 'the best of all is, God is with us!'" *

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* Congregationalism and Methodism, by Rev. William C. Hoyt. New York: 1846.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## EARLY METHODIST CHURCHES IN NEW ENGLAND — CONTINUED.

Original Vigor of Methodism — Lee's first Visit to Hartford, Conn. — His second Visit — Preaches in the State House — Formation of the first Methodist Society there — Its Extinction — Its Renovation — Struggles and Triumphs — Lee's first Visit to Warren — Daniel Smith's Visit — Formation of the first Society — Ezekiel Cooper — Mr. Martin Luther — Erection of the first Methodist Chapel in Rhode Island — Its Dedication by Lee — Overthrow of the Society — Its remarkable Resuscitation and subsequent Prosperity — The Church in Bristol — Persecutions and Providences — Later Success.

When we consider the formidable difficulties which Methodism had to surmount, in its early progress in New England, we cannot be surprised that its advancement, in many places, was tardy, and in some, attended by discouraging reverses. There were instances, indeed, in which, after energetic and persevering labors, and much incipient prosperity, nearly utter extinction followed. But scarcely one such case can be found where the buried germ, whose early sproutings were apparently obliterated, did not in some more genial day shoot forth again with renewed vigor, and bud, blossom, and bear fruit; and not unfrequently, shake like Lebanon. Such was the vigor of the doctrines, discipline, and spirituality of Methodism.

We have seen an instance of resuscitation, after almost entire declension, in Norwalk. The church in Hartford is another example. The biographer of Lee informs us that he visited Hartford on the 9th of December, 1789.

> " He continued in the city two days, during which time he preached twice or thrice, to large and attentive congregations. He was much pleased with the visit, and was encouraged to hope that God was about to open an effectual door for the preaching of the gospel by the Methodists in that place. His hopes were fully realized, for many were stirred up to inquire the way of the Lord more perfectly, and to see that there was something in religion which they had never experienced."

Soon after the arrival of Messrs. Brush, Roberts and Smith, he passed, with the latter, to Weathersfield, where, as we have noticed, he met with two " old friends, from Hartford," who cheered him with the information that his former labors there, were yet producing fruit, and that " the Lord was reviving his work" in the city. He immediately left Mr. Smith in Weathersfield, and departed for Hartford, where he put up at Mr. Winship's, a private lodging prepared for him by his two friends. " Here I was informed," he says, " that several persons were awakened by my preaching, when I preached here before." The good news " humbled his soul in the dust, and strengthened his faith." As usual, he proceeded to labor again, forthwith. The State House bell was rung, and at two o'clock, he ascended the desk, and proclaimed " *Quench not the spirit* " to a " large company of hearers, who heard with great attention and many tears." " Glory be to God," exclaimed the tireless Itinerant, " for his goodness to me in preaching his word. I felt as if it had taken hold on the hearts of the hearers."

At dark, the same evening, he was again in the State

House, exhorting the people to "*Fight the good fight of faith*," and "*lay hold on eternal life*." "Some of them were willing," he says, "to give us the right hand of fellowship, and bid us God speed in our undertaking." The next day he spent in "visiting the sick and the well, who desired his company." In the afternoon he held a small social meeting "with some persons who came to converse on the form and power of godliness;" but of course, "according to the New England custom, a little time was spent in talking about *principles*." At night he preached again in the State House, to a greater assembly "than had ever been seen there on any occasion." His word was in power; he could scarcely keep from weeping aloud, and after the service several persons came to him, entreating his prayers. He left the city the next day, believing that the good seed he had sown would yet spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God.

On his way to Boston, from the New York Conference, in October, 1790, he again passed through Hartford, and "*formed a society*." Of the subsequent history of this "little flock," we can learn nothing whatever. The existing records of the church extend only to 1820; an hiatus occurs from that period back to 1790, during which we have but a single and discouraging glimpse of the position of Methodism in the city. Mr. Lee revisited New England in 1808; he passed over the whole field of his former labors, with grateful surprise at the prosperity of the churches which he had planted with so much privation and labor. After a delightful tour far into the interior of Maine, he returned through Massachusetts. On "Sunday, 25th of September, he crossed Connecticut River to Hartford, and preached in the old playhouse, in the morning and in the afternoon; 'but,' says he, 'there is a very poor prospect of doing good in that place by our preachers.'" This is all we know of the history of Methodism in Hartford, during a period of thirty years.

It is quite certain, indeed, that the original society dwindled entirely away, and though Roberts, Smith, Garrettson, Hibbard, and other veterans, occasionally preached in a barn of the suburbs, and sometimes in a school-house of the city, yet for several years prior to 1820, no society existed there, and the preachers who visited the place from Middletown and Granville Circuits were repelled by apparently insuperable discouragements.

So far as we can learn, the present society dates its origin from a visit of Rev. J. N. Maffitt, in 1820. There was then in Hartford but one Methodist, Mr. Chester Coe.* The second was Mr. John Jewett, who moved, with his family, to the city, in April, 1820. He had been a captive among the Indians in Oregon, was a man of lively devotion, and a remarkable singer. "He could sing from morning to night, and night to morning," says our correspondent. His house was the first opened for the social devotions of the renovated society. He died the next year. "Bishop Hedding preached his funeral sermon to a very large and respectable congregation, for though Mr. Jewett was a poor, he was also a very upright man, and by his extraordinary singing abilities greatly aided the progress of the work of God in the little society."

Mr. Maffitt was permitted to preach after six o'clock on Sunday evenings, (a part of the evening not then considered "holy time," in Connecticut,) in the Old South Congregational Church, of which Dr. Flint was pastor. Several persons were immediately awakened under his labors. "The first prayer-meeting was held," says the Record, "in the house of Mr. Jewett, at which were present six persons only, viz., Mr. Jewett and wife, Mr. Coe, two females, and a colored man." The society passed through a series of severe struggles and vicissitudes, before it became securely established. From Dr. Flint's church, it removed its meetings to the new State House, where Mr. Maffitt commenced preaching on Sunday, the 13th of August. " Several persons were awakened on the same day, and in the evening," says the Record, " we had a prayer-meeting at Mr. Jewett's house ; it was full, and two mourners were present. Meetings were kept up three successive evenings." As they were not allowed to hold evening worship in the new State House, they had to repair to the old Court House, on Church street, which was occupied by several families. There they held evening meetings, on both Sundays and week-days, and the number of hearers greatly increased. They were soon compelled to take down the partitions, and form several rooms into one, which was spacious enough to make " a tolerably large chapel." " When Mr. Maffitt," continues the Record, " returned from visiting several neighboring towns and villages, a glorious work of the Spirit commenced ; through his preaching hundreds were under conviction of sin, and many were converted in the old Court House. Upwards of one hundred joined the Methodist Society that winter." Bishop Hedding visited them about this time, and administered to the new church its first sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the Court House. In 1821, they removed to a large room over some stores, at the corner of Burr and Maine streets, called Talcott's buildings, which they named " The Chapel." They were blessed with several conversions here, also. In July, Rev. Samuel Merwin, then Presiding Elder of New Haven District, visited them, administered the Lord's Supper, and encouraged them to attempt the erection of a chapel. He soon after sent them Benoni English, as a pastor. Successful thus far, through many changes and hard struggles, they pressed on energetically, till their present commodious temple was erected. Deacon Josiah Beckwith, of the Centre Congregational Church, united with them, and it was principally through his influence and liberality that the chapel was erected. He was a devoted man and has long since gone to heaven.*

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* Extract from the Records of 1821, in a letter of Rev. George Coles to the Writer.

One of Mr. Maffitt's chief supporters, during this revival of the Hartford church, was Mr. Job Allyn, of Windsor, who took him to his home in that town, after the labors of the evening in Hartford. Mr. Allyn, was not, at that time, a Methodist, but believing that the young church was not rightly treated, he espoused their cause with generous courage, and aided them throughout their struggles. He afterwards became a member of the society, and has done much for its prosperity.

Mr. English was succeeded in the pastorship of the society by Ebenezer Brown, and the latter by Lewis Pease. A succession of able laborers have followed him. "The church has been repeatedly refreshed with showers of living water." Many souls have passed from death to life, through its instrumentality; many have died in the faith, and have gone to swell the songs of triumph above.† Thus did Methodism come forth from its temporary grave in Hartford, unto a resurrection of life. Its chapel was renewed and enlarged in 1839–40, by contributions given as an offering in commemoration of the centenary of Methodism. The last returns of members from Hartford, report three hundred and twenty-one, including fifty-nine at East Hartford.

WARREN, R. I., is noted in our history as the locality of the *first Methodist chapel erected in the State of Rhode*

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* Christian Secretary, Hartford, 1847.

† Letter of Rev. P. C. Oakley to the Writer.

*Island.* Lee visited the town in 1790, on his route from Connecticut, through Rhode Island, to Boston. "He was invited," says his biographer, "by the ministers of other denominations, to preach in their pulpits, and was treated kindly by the people generally." The immediately subsequent events in the history of Methodism in Warren are but vaguely remembered by the few survivors of those early days. We are indebted to one of its pastors* for the following facts.

"Some time about the year 1790, Mr. Samuel Pierce — a Freewill Baptist, residing in Kikamuit, in the town of Warren, a little east of the village — on his way from Newport, fell in with the Rev. Daniel Smith, whom he invited to his house to preach. Mr. Pierce sent a lad around among the neighbors, to give notice that a Methodist minister would address them at his house that evening. The boy, from mischief, or because he wished to call out a large congregation, varied his notice to suit the different families upon which he called. To the Baptists he represented that Mr. S. was a Baptist, and among Universalists he was said to be one of their denomination. At the time appointed, the house was well filled, and the people were greatly pleased with the new preacher. What astonished them most of all was that he knelt when he prayed. In 1791, Lemuel Smith and Menzies Rainor preached in Warren for six months, each visiting it once in four weeks. During this time a class was formed, consisting of 12 or 14 members, the most of whom belonged to a Freewill Baptist Church in Rehoboth. They took this step with the advice of their own minister, as their place of worship was several miles from Warren, and their attendance necessarily irregular. In 1792, Ezekiel Cooper preached at Warren. He was on his way to Boston, where he exercised the office of Presiding Elder the next year. A surviving member of the church remembers distinctly the texts from which he preached: Rom. 1: 16, I. Cor. 16: 22, and I. Kings, 6: 8 — the last rather a singular one, certainly, and he framed out of it a singular but ingenious sermon, which excited much interest in those days.†

"In 1793, Philip Wager was appointed to Warren. He was the first Methodist preacher regularly sent there. Up to this time, the society had worshipped in a barn fitted up for the purpose, and situated half a mile east of the village. The devoted Itinerants found an early friend in Mr. Martin Luther. His house was for years their home. Several members of his family were converted, and united with the church, and one of them, Mrs. Patience Child, remains to this day one of its

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* Rev. Robert M. Hatfield.

† See account of the church at Marblehead.

> most esteemed members. It need hardly be said that the Methodists were opposed in Warren, as ignorantly and with as blind a bigotry as in the other New England towns. For years after they had preached there, it was currently reported, and by many believed, that they made no use of the Bible in preaching, but took their texts from polemical books which they carried in their saddle-bags. During the time that Mr. Luther's house was their home, he received an anonymous communication, in which he was warned against harboring these "vagrant imposters," and in conclusion was threatened that if he did not turn them out of doors, his house would be pulled down about his head."

In 1794, John Chalmers was stationed there, and during this year a house of worship was erected. Jesse Lee preached the dedication sermon. Mr. Lee arrived in the village on the evening of the 20th of Sept., and "put up at Mr. Martin Luther's." The next day was the Sabbath. At 10 o'clock, A. M., he preached in a barn, from Jeremiah 23 : 19 : "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord ; and like a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces ?" He "found freedom in preaching and was much comforted." At 2 o'clock, P. M., he preached again, on Eph. 4 : 7 : "Neither give place to the devil."

> "I found," he says, "much of the divine presence, and could bless God for the favorable opportunity of teaching the people. The Lord has dealt kindly with the inhabitants of this place since I was here last. We have a considerable society formed, a preaching-house raised, and the top of it covered. I have no doubt but that God is among these people."

Two or three days were yet necessary to prepare the building for dedication. He preached, during the interval, in Bristol, and other neighboring places. On Wednesday, the 24th, was the great event, as it was then deemed, of the history of the infant church — the dedication (though in a condition which would, in this day, be considered not half finished) of the first Methodist chapel of the State. Lee preached the dedicatory discourse at 4 o'clock, P. M., from Haggai 2 : 9 : "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." The preacher had but little difficulty in proving the first proposition of his text, for their only sanctuary hitherto had been a barn or private house. He had "liberty in preaching," a phrase that means much when used by him. "It is the first Methodist meeting-house," he adds, "which has been built in the State, and this is the first sermon preached in it. I hope God will own the Methodists in this town." His prayer has been prevailing in heaven ever since. Though trials have tested the society, and at one time reduced it almost to extinction, yet has God "*owned*" it, and raised it up from apparent ruin to a destiny worthy of its distinction as the parent church of the State. This festal day was closed with more private and sacred devotions. The little company of disciples met to mingle their praises and tears of joy in a class-meeting, which was conducted by the great evangelist. "The power of the Lord was among us," he exclaims, "and many souls were happy in his love."

But "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" he "scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," and disciplines his church by afflictions. The society at Warren was destined to witness a signal interposition of renovating grace, and in such a manner that "the excellency of the power might be of God and not of" man. Not long after the dedication of its chapel, it desired a stationed preacher, and though it continues for several years to give its name, in the Minutes, to a Circuit, it was really an independent Station. John Hill had charge of it, and taught school meanwhile in the village, as a collateral means of support. Mr. Hill, on some alleged provocation, took offence, and seceded from the church, carrying with him many of its members. Then came the day of trial; the yet feeble society was scattered and peeled, till, in 1800, only *two members* remained. They were both females, and the consecrated honor of their steadfast example, in the day of darkness, is no inglorious distinction among the many precious memories of their sex which are embalmed in the history of Methodism. Their names were *Nancy Childs*, and *Amy Easterbrooks*. Like the two Marys at the supulchre of Christ, they still sought for their Lord at the grave of the extinguished church. They remained immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord. Deserted by all the rest of the society, they nevertheless maintained prayer-meetings in private houses, and in 1801 their humble and persevering efforts were crowned with the blessing of God. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the village; some fifteen converts were added to their number; the society was resuscitated, and commenced again its career, under better auspices than ever. It has since had its share of trials — the providential discipline of God's true Israel, in all ages — but has come forth from them all with songs of deliverance. In 1805, the chapel which had previously been left unfinished, was put in order, and furnished with a pulpit, sounding-board, and pews. In 1833 it was still further improved; increased prosperity required additional improvements in 1836, and in 1846 it was superseded by the present elegant and substantial edifice, one of the best in Rhode Island.

Thus did the sacred fire burst forth again from its own ashes, in Warren. The society there has become a stronghold of Methodism; a host of devoted watchmen have stood successively upon its towers, and it is now one of the most efficient stations of the Providence Conference, reporting a membership 250 strong. Surely they that "believe in Him shall not be confounded;" and "though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth them with his hand."

The first Methodist sermon preached in BRISTOL, R. I., was delivered by Jesse Lee, on July 2, 1790. By some means, a Mr. Daniel Gladding (father of the late Nathaniel Gladding, of Bristol) heard that a Methodist Itinerant was to preach on the 30th of June, at Newport, and would the next day pass through Bristol to Providence.

> "Having a curiosity," says our authority, "to know what kind of people the Methodists were, he resolved to stop the preacher and induce him, if possible, to address the good people of Bristol. On July 1, he looked out sharply, to hail the stranger as he passed. At last he saw two men leisurely trotting their horses through the village. Being at a distance from them, he dropped his work, and set off upon a run to overtake them. He reached them upon the bridge, after they had passed the village. Inquiring, quite out of breath, if they were Methodist preachers, he ascertained that one of them was Lee himself. They were induced by his entreaties to return, and were entertained at his house. The next day, their curious host spread far and wide a notice of their arrival, and of Lee's intention to address them. He preached to them accordingly, and passed on to Warren." *

In about two years after, Lemuel Smith was appointed to Providence Circuit, which included Bristol. A society had been formed which comprised eighteen persons. They were permitted to occupy the Court House; not, however, without much annoyance from the rabble, who concerted numerous plans to disturb and break up their meetings.

> "On one evening a man came to the door and cried, 'Come and see a blazing star!' Numbers ran to see the sight, threw the congregation into disorder, and closed the services for the evening. At another time, a gang came with drum and fife and the discharge of fire arms, marched around the building, and drowned the preacher's voice. The mob often followed the women to their homes, hooting, and throwing stones among them. On one occasion, the sons of Belial determined to make a desperate effort to deter the people from hearing the new preachers. They obtained liberty to use a swivel which was on board a vessel in the harbor, and announced that it would be planted before the Court House for the public amusement, and to menace the devoted few who went thither to worship. Towards evening, they went on board the ship for the gun, having induced several sailors to join them; but in getting it into the boat, by some mishap they lost it overboard. Perhaps they had stimulated rather too much to manage with discretion;

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* Letter from Rev. Asa Kent.

at any rate the gun disappeared for ever. All fishing and dragging for it were useless; there, I suppose, it still lies. The opposition became too intolerable to be borne by some of the members of the infant society; they actually moved away, in order to find a place of quietness and peace." *

In the spring of 1775, three of the most important families of the church left the town, and the society became so discouraged and reduced both in numbers and resources, that a house could not be found to accommodate the preacher at his periodical visits. Thomas Coope was on the Circuit, and being utterly discouraged at the depressed condition of the appointment, and seeing only before it the prospect of further declension, if not extinction, he announced that he could visit them but once more unless they could save him from the necessity of staying at the village tavern, by providing him a lodging. "The heart of the feeble society sunk like lead," says our correspondent. "What can be done?" was their inquiry, "for we cannot do without the bread of life."

Bristol was thus, like several other early Methodist societies, whose history we have narrated, tried in the fire. But man's extremity is God's opportunity. About this time, two young ladies, whose hearts were knit together in affection, joined the dwindling church, and entered with the warmest sympathy into all its necessities and trials. They immediately exerted themselves to procure a "a prophet's chamber," and the funds necessary to continue Methodist preaching in the town. Their pious diligence was successful. Means were provided, the lodging procured, and "made all right just before what would otherwise have been their last meeting." Thus was the germ of Methodism in Bristol saved from utter decay, to be nurtured (though through much subsequent adversity) into a vigorous growth, and to refresh under its branches, in later years, scores and hun-

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* Letter from Rev. Asa Kent.

dreds of redeemed souls. One of these devoted women has since entered the church on high; the other has been known in our churches throughout New England, as the excellent companion of one of our veteran preachers, the Rev. Asa Kent.

The young church took courage. They needed it, for though they had secured the ministration of the word of life at regular, but distant intervals, they were yet feeble, without resources, and a derision to scorners; but they held on their humble way longer, without a sanctuary, yet often cheered with the revelation of God's glorious grace and the salvation of sinners. At last they had increased sufficiently in numbers and resources to attempt the erection of a temple. "They raised and finished," says our correspondent, "the *outside* of a building, which was forty feet by fifty, and though seated with rough benches, it seemed to them after the similitude of a palace." In about a year they completed the inside, and this gave them stronger hope that they should finally come forth victorious from all opposition. In 1812, a remarkable revival of religion spread through the town, during which one hundred members were added to the society; and in 1820, a still more eminent work of grace occurred, and resulted in the addition of more than a hundred and fifty souls to their numbers. After many and severe trials, the Bristol church has become an efficient station. Its last returns reported two hundred and fifteen members, and while we pen these lines, the fire of divine grace is shining more radiantly than ever around its altars.

Four among the churches we have thus far enumerated, Norwalk, Hartford, Warren, and Bristol, present a striking similarity in their history, and teach a most encouraging lesson. One was abandoned in despair by the travelling ministry, and another was about to be; one became extinct, and another was saved from extinction by the steadfastness of only two members ; yet have they all, by signal providences, risen from their ruins, and become strongholds of our cause. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning ;" therefore "sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

# CHAPTER XV.

## FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Lee's Visit to Lynn — Mr. Benjamin Johnson, Sen. — The first Methodist Society in Massachusetts formed — Its first Temple — Remarkable Incident — Erection of the first Methodist Chapel in Massachusetts — Pastors — Statistics — Signal Honors of Lynn.

THE church in Lynn has the peculiar distinction of being the first Methodist Episcopal society formed in Massachusetts — an honor which can never be forfeited. While despondent, and almost friendless, in Boston, in the winter of 1790, Lee received, as we have seen, a letter from Mr. Benjamin Johnson, Sen., of Lynn, inviting him to visit that town.

"It was on the 14th day of December, 1790," says one of his successors in Lynn, "that he came. He came not by steam, as he would have come fifty years afterwards, but the keen winter wind swept along his pathway, as over those snowy plains he pursued his cold journey. There were few that knew his coming, and when he arrived, and as he rode along the Common, it was as when any stranger comes. Here and there, perchance, an eye from the comfortable parlor might have fallen upon the chilly traveller, as he passed slowly by; but no one dreamed that he was looking upon the forerunner of Methodism — the pioneer of a new and powerful church, that was destined to spread itself as the fruitful vine. He passed by, that night, the very spot where we are now assembled; [the chapel at the Common.] But he saw here no beauteous church, or waiting audience, to welcome his coming What might have been his thoughts, as he entered the village, must remain unknown to us. Yet who doubts that as that good man journied hither, he came praying? A pious stranger, in a strange land, come for no other purpose than to be a blessing to the people, did he not, as he passed along these streets, lift up a frequent prayer for the divine influence to accompany his visit? Was not that prayer a prayer of deep and solemn agony? Was it not breathed forth from the soul's depths, accompanied with strong crying and tears? That prayer was heard in heaven."*

The Itinerant stranger checked his horse in front of a spacious house, at the corner of Essex and Market streets,† not far from the present site of the Lynn Common Church. It was the habitation of Benjamin Johnson. He was received to its warm hearth, and its warmer hearts. Mr. Johnson had heard the Methodist preachers in the South, some twenty years before, and believing that they were "men who showed the way of salvation," he welcomed them to the hospitalities of his home. His name stands at the head of the oldest existing record of the Lynn church.‡ He died in 1810, aged sixty-nine years, but the descendants of his family have preserved the name familiar among the Methodists of Lynn.

The arrival of Mr. Lee was too late for an evening service, but the village was quite generally advertised, the next day, that he would preach, at night, in the house of his host. He had a large company present, to whom he declared that "*God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*" "Bless the Lord!" he exclaimed, on retiring to rest, that night, "bless the Lord, O my soul, for bringing me among this people."

A profound impression was made by the first discourses of Mr. Lee. "As soon as we began to preach in Lynn," he says, "the word had a powerful effect on the hearers, who flocked to hear it by hundreds." *

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* Rev. Charles Adams' Half Century Sermon.

† Mr. Johnson's house was taken down the present spring, 1847.

‡ The date of this Record is 1819. We have failed to recover any earlier one.

On the 20th of February, 1791, he formed the first class, not only of Lynn, but of Massachusetts. It consisted of only eight persons; † but in one week twenty-one more were added to the number, and on the 9th of the following May it amounted to fifty-eight; while, on the same day, more than seventy men took certificates of their attendance on and support of the Methodist ministry, in conformity with the religious statutes of the Commonwealth at that time.‡ Of the twenty-nine members of the first class, Lee says: "Some of them were truly engaged with the Lord, and much devoted to his service; while others were sincere seekers of salvation." §

The first meetings of the new church were held in Mr. Johnson's house; but their augmented numbers soon required more room. They found it in a neighboring barn, deeming it not, in their necessity, unbefitting the humble followers of Him whose birth-place was a manger, and whose temple was the open field. Their subsequent pastor, from whom we have already quoted, eloquently remarks: —

> "The ground floor of this church was the homely plank of the thoroughfare. The pews were the rough, uncushioned boards, that were extended across that thoroughfare. The galleries were the lofts, or scaffolds, where hay was wont to lodge, but which had now disappeared, to make way for the crowds that had climed up thither to listen to the words of salvation. Concerning the pulpit, I have thought it necessary to make but little inquiry. Doubtless, it was in keeping with the

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* Lee's History of Methodism, p. 165.

† Lee's History of Methodism, p. 165. Dr. Bangs says, (Vol. I., Anno 1790,) the number was thirty.

‡ They continued, however, to be assessed, and were compelled to pay for the support of the Congregational clergy till they appealed to the law, in a suit for damages. The Rev. Enoch Mudge was one of their witnesses. "They recovered," he says, "but yet had to pay the parish for assessing and collecting the money."

§ Lee's History, p. 165.

rest of the fixtures already named, corresponding well with the other features of the picture. Such was the chapel wherein was cradled the infant church, which has since grown up to so much vigor and ability. And if any one is inclined to despise such a beginning, let him first pause a moment and remember that in circumstances not entirely dissimilar, the great Head of the church began his glorious career on earth. A stable was the lodging-place of the infant Savior, and a crib once cradled him who was Christ the Lord. Let him ask himself, too, whether he would not, even now, prefer a place of worship so humble, with the presence of the Holy Spirit's influences, to the more splendid church, adorned with every ornament save the presence and glory of Immanuel."

The Rev. Daniel Smith and Jesse Lee exercised their powerful ministry in this barn till the first Methodist Chapel was covered, and a rough under-floor laid in it.

The roll of the first society in Massachusetts should have been preserved sacredly, as a precious document of the church; but it is probably lost irrecoverably. Yet the first names of the earliest class have been embalmed in the memory of the church. They were, Enoch Mudge, Sen., and his wife, Lydia; Benjamin Johnson, Sen., and his wife; Mary Lewis, Hannah Leigh, Ruth Johnson, and Deborah Mansfield, now widow Ramsdell. "These all remained steadfast in the faith, and all, except widow Ramsdell, (who still lives,) died in great peace." * There are a few venerable survivors of those early days, who joined the first band soon after its formation, and whose hearts, though beating feebly with age, are warm with the precious memory of their old and departed brethren. Their testimony is unanimous in respect to the deep piety of the infant church. Its devotion, harmony, and zeal, rendered it congenial with the devout and missionary soul of Lee. It was his oasis in the desert; his head-quarters, from which, during the remainder of his labors in New England, he ever and anon sallied forth, inspirited by brotherly sym-

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* Letter from Rev. J. W. Merrill, Pastor at Lynn.

pathy, and owned of God, to do battle for the truth, in harder fields.

Of the only remaining member of the first class, we have the following account, furnished by her present pastor:

Widow Ramsdell, now aged 78 years and 9 months, retains her faculties in more than common vigor, and is fully awaiting her last change, in full hope of the glory of God. As she is the only survivor of the first class, and as she has been for more than fifty-seven years a consistent Christian, the following dream, which occurred some time before Mr. Lee visited Lynn, may be of some interest. I have no superstitious views of dreams; still, they often are curious, and sometimes useful. I took the substance of the following account from the lips of the aged lady: — When a young woman, before her marrage, she dreamed that she was in much mental distress, but could not comprehend its cause. A person appeared before her, and said, "Suppose you should die as you are, what would become of you?" She answered, she thought she should be lost. He inquired, "Why?" adding, "there is no necessity for it." He then said, "You must pray." She responded, "I never prayed in my life; I do not know how to pray." "Kneel down," said he, "and say, Save, Lord, or I perish, I die, I sink into hell!" He added other sentiments, now forgotten. She awoke, but the impressions of the dream followed her until the coming of Mr. Lee. During the interval before his arrival, she was often much agitated and distressed. When Mr. Lee came to Lynn, her father attended his meetings with great satisfaction, but she declined to hear him, as the people had been imposed upon by a wandering preacher just before. When, however, he first preached at Graves' End, in the old Goodrich house, now standing on the turnpike, she consented to attend with her father. The house was so full that the people were forced to remain standing. The venerable lady describes the scene as impressing her mind with strange solemnity. Soon after she entered the house, Mr. Lee stepped to the place where he stood to preach, so that she could see him distinctly. As soon as she saw him, she exclaimed to herself, "I 've seen that man before." During his discourse, he uttered many of the words spoken to her by the apparition, in her dream. These deepened her former serious impressions. The next time he preached in Graves' End he invited the people to remain after the discourse. This was in February, 1790. With seven others, she remained. Mr. Lee called this a class-meeting. When he spoke to her, he remarked that she appeared very wretched, and he could tell her what alone would comfort her. He then directed her to pray. She said, "I do not know how to pray." "Kneel down," said he, "and say, Save, Lord, or I perish, I die, I sink into hell." Henceforward she attended his meetings. Sometimes she supposed that she had received a change of heart; but often doubted. In the June following, during a terrible thunder storm, she fell upon her knees in prayer, as directed by Mr. Lee. There an application of these words, as by an audible voice, was made to her soul:

> "Peace, troubled soul, thou needest not fear,
> Thy great Provider still is near," &c.

This hymn gave her unspeakable satisfaction, and the evidence of the divine favor was so clear as to leave no shadow of doubt on her mind. Since that time she has been a happy Christian, and her evening sky is enlightened and beautified by a good hope of heaven.

The little flock were permitted a few times to hear their new preacher in the parish chapels. On a Sabbath some weeks subsequent to the formation of the class, he says, that after "a weeping and solemn time," at Mr. Johnson's, where he had preached twice and "met the women's class."

> "I preached at night in the meeting-house, from Isa. 45: 7. I had a very full house, and spoke with a great deal of freedom. I had many to hear me that seldom come to our meetings. Yesterday I was denied the use of a pulpit in which I had frequently preached, and to-day I have obtained liberty to preach in one where I have never preached before. So it is; I pass through good and evil report; I have prosperity enough to keep my spirits from sinking, and adversity sufficient to keep me from being exalted above measure." *

His success soon excited the fears of those who had control of the town chapels, and it became necessary for the young church to provide a sanctuary for themselves. They "had a mind to work;" the projected building was thrown up with a despatch which has seldom been equalled. It was dedicated, amidst the rejoicings of the society, in twelve days after its foundation was laid. "They began," says Lee, † "on the 14th of June, raised it on the 21st, and dedicated it on the 26th, 1791." The site of this edifice was near the one on which now stands the spacious temple that superseded it. The building itself has been moved to the southern part

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* Mem., chap. XI.

† Hist. of Methodism, Anno 1790.

of the village, where it is used as a public schoolhouse. It is a venerable though unostentatious monument to the eyes of every Methodist who visits that beautiful town.

Lee, in speaking of the erection of this chapel, says, that "from that time religion continued to prosper in Lynn for many months without any declension," and that in the course of the year there was an "awakening among the people in different places not far from Lynn." * The number of members reported at the Conference the next year was not less than 118, and the ensuing year it rose to 166. The numerical prosperity of the church was, however, destined to undergo many vicissitudes. In 1794 it began to decline, and gradually decreased to 82, the number returned in 1801. The next year it suddenly rises to 121, and, with the exception of a single year, continues to advance till 1811, when it reached 287. In 1821 it amounted to 400. Since then it has passed through various changes, but with a healthy average growth. The little band of eight members which Lee organised, has enlarged to nearly eight hundred in the village of Lynn itself, and if we include the two other societies of the same town, which have sprung from it, the aggregate, at the last returns, (1846,) was more than 1000. What hath God wrought? Many, also, have gone from these churches militant to the church triumphant. The great Asbury predicted aright when he said, "Here we shall make a firm stand, and from this central point, from Lynn, shall the light of Methodism radiate through the State."†

Lynn has been served in the ministry by some of the most honored men in our history. Lee, Bonsal, Daniel Smith, Bloodgood, Pickering, Broadhead, Wells, Jane, Webb, Kent, Soule, Hedding, Sias, Mudge, Kibby, among the fathers of

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* History of Methodism, Anno 1790.

† Journal, Anno 1791.

our Itinerancy, and a host of others, their immediate or later successors, men "mighty in the Scriptures," and "abundant in labors."

Four branches have sprung from the parent church at the Common, and are now distinct societies in different parts of the town, viz: the church at Wood End, where a chapel was built in 1811, and has lately been thoroughly renovated; the church in Saugus, which opened its chapel in 1827; South Street Church, whose chapel was erected in 1830, and the society in Danvers, detached from the parent church in 1840.* The membership reported in these societies, for 1846, was as follows: Lynn Common, 395; Lynn Wood End, 206; Lynn South Street, 169; Saugus, 150; Danvers, 100; affording an aggregate of 1020.

No less than 21 travelling and local preachers have been raised up in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Lynn, and among them the first native Methodist preacher of New England, who, more than half a century ago, was sent forth by the struggling band to proclaim the "joyful sound" through the land, but has now returned to their sanctuary to die amidst its hallowed memories.

The Methodists of Lynn established a Sabbath School for their children as early as 1816, and organized in 1818, the first Missionary Society formed in the Methodist Episcopal Church.† Five signal honors belong to the church at Lynn. It was the *first Methodist Society* organized in Massachusetts; it erected the *first Methodist Chapel* in the State; it was the seat of the *first Methodist Conference* held in New England; it raised up the *first native Methodist preacher* of New England, and it organized the *first*

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* Rev. Mr. Adams' Sermon.

† Ibid. Our General Missionary Society was not formed till 1819.

*Methodist Missionary Society* in the United States. Hitherto, under the prudent and devout care of its aged members, it has well maintained its bright distinctions. May their children never tarnish these gems of honor that bestud their altar.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## METHODISM IN BOSTON.

Religious state of the City before Lee's arrival — Mr. Black's Labors in Boston — Lee on the Common — His second Visit — Difficulties — Formation of a Class — Erection of the first Chapel — Col. Binney — Multiplication of Churches in the City — Statistics.

The early history of Methodism in Boston is but a record of desperate struggles, attended with slow success, and with frequent declensions, if not defeats. The religious condition of the city was quite equivocal when Lee arrived in it. The Boston churches had witnessed the displays of divine grace under the labors of Whitefield and Tennant, but a reaction had taken place, as we have seen. These mighty men of God had been denounced by several pastors; the influences of the Spirit had been withdrawn; declension and moral death fell upon the churches, and subsequently wide spread defection from the evangelical doctrines occurred, till only one of the Puritan churches (the Old South) maintained its adherence to them, and the fidelity of this one was more nominal than real. The public mind was passing through this downward progress when Methodism bore its standard into the city. It is no matter of wonder therefore that the evangelical standard-bearers found comparatively few who were disposed to rally to their ensign.

Early efforts were made to introduce Methodism into the city. In 1771, Boardman, the colleague of Pillmore — the first Methodist preachers sent over by Wesley — visited it, and "preached, and formed a small society,"* but it soon after expired, for want of pastoral care. As early as October, 1784, William Black, a revered name in the history of Methodism in the British provinces, preached "in the Sandemanian Chapel," then on Hanover, near Cross streets, "to large and respectable congregations."† He continued in the city about three months, laboring with some success. "Many," says the old church records, "who now are at rest in the arms of that Christ whom he preached, and many who are at this day bright and exemplary lights in the Baptist churches of the city, have dated their convictions of sin from his sermons."‡ The fear of the contempt associated with the new name of Methodist led the converts under Mr. Black's short ministry to take shelter in other denominations, so that on the arrival of later Methodist laborers, no distinct vestiges of these first efforts were found. The devoted Freeborn Garrettson, on his passage from Nova Scotia, paused in the city, and preached several times in private houses, but formed no society. Lee arrived, as we have noticed, on the 9th of July, 1790.

"Immediately," says his biographer, "he endeavored to find out a place where he might preach, but although he conversed with many on the subject, every expedient failed. He could get none to encourage him in his benevolent design; none would put themselves to the trouble of finding a suitable place where he might deliver his message to the people. Finding the persons whom he addressed on the subject quite indifferent, he finally concluded that he would preach on the Common the day following."

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*Bangs' History, vol. I., Anno 1772.

†"Concise History of the Gathering of the Meth. Epis. Church in Boston," written by Col. A. Binney, and preserved in the Church Records of 1800. We are indebted to Thomas Patten, Esq., for this record.

‡ Ibid.

Accordingly, at the appointed time, which was 6 o'clock, Sunday afternoon, he preached, as we have seen, under the "Great Elm" of the Common, with four persons to hear him at the beginning, and 3,000 at the close of his sermon. He passed on, the next day, to visit the coast towns, as far as Portsmouth, N. H., but returned the same week to the city, and preached to a large multitude, on the Common, exclaiming, at the close of the day, "Blessed be God, he made his quickening presence known, and met us in the fields." He continued a week or more in Boston, preaching in private houses, and in the Baptist church, but chiefly on the Common. His congregation there, on the last Sabbath, was about 5,000 strong, notwithstanding the wetness of the earth, from the late rains.

He departed for the Conference in New York, but by the 12th of November was again in Boston. The prospect before him was still more discouraging. He found a private house to preach in the next evening, but spent an entire month in useless endeavors to obtain a more suitable place of worship. The court-house, school-houses, and churches, were all denied him. "My cry," he says, "was, Lord, help me!" "I met with difficulties and trials daily; yet I put my trust in God, and in general was confirmed in the opinion that God would bless my coming to Boston." He spent a week at Lynn, and was cheered by more auspicious prospects, but turned again to Boston, determined to surmount the difficulties which there beset him. "When I arrived," he says, "every thing seemed as dark as when I left it."

His former labors had, however, raised him up friends, though they were unable, such was the popular prejudice, to procure him a public place for preaching. Col. Binney, referring to his first visit, says that "during those field sermons, as they were called, there were many brought under conviction who have since become bright and shining lights in the world."* These men gathered around him, and repulsed from all public buildings, they waited on his ministrations in the house of Mr. Samuel Burrill, (on Sheaf street,) who became a member of the first class which was afterwards formed in the city.

The meetings at Mr. B.'s were crowded, and continued till June, 1792, when "the desire to hear the gospel became more general," and a successful effort was made to procure the use of a public school-house. Rev. Jeremiah Cosden had meanwhile become the preacher of the new church. He followed the usage established by Wesley in England, of preaching at 5 o'clock in the morning. The ringing of the school bell at this early hour was too great a grievance to certain self-indulgent citizens in the neighborhood, one of whom, a member of the school committee, contrived to deprive them of the use of the building soon after. The little band had, however, caught, by this time, some of Lee's persistent energy. Repulsed on all hands, they next applied to *the keeper of a hotel* — the Green Dragon Tavern, which was near the Baptist Church that stands at the corner of Union and Hanover streets — and hired one of its rooms for their assemblies. They were permitted to occupy it but one Sabbath, "the name of Methodist being," says the old Record, "too odious at that time," for the credit even of an innkeeper. Their common trials only bound them more closely together in a common sympathy, and now driven from all public accommodations, they met together, and resolutely formed themselves into a society, with the determination to plant Methodism in the city at all hazards. "There were," says the document from which we have quoted, "a small number whom the Lord had selected, *twelve of whom, in the month of August, met at the house of Samuel Burrill, where they were joined into a society, under the denomination of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Boston*." Thus, after many preliminary struggles, arose, under the most discouraging circumstances, but with good resolution, the first Methodist Society in Boston. Its brief roll was headed by the name of Samuel Burrill. None, so far as we can learn from the Record, were ever expelled. Two withdrew, and two became preachers.

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*Concise History, &c., p. 9.

"And now," says the Record, "their first object was to find a suitable place where they could assemble and worship God together." They obtained a room in the private house of "a Mr. John Conner, on Ship street, (now Ann street,) where they held their meetings for some time," but were compelled at last to retire from it. They then "hired a chamber in the house of Mr. John Ruddock, opposite Clark's ship-yard, on Ship street, [on Ann street, near the north-west corner of Bartlett street.] This chamber was dedicated to the service of God by Rev. James Martin, a local preacher from Virginia, (who was in town at that time on his private business,) August 17, 1793, at which period the society had increased to about twenty members." * It was here that the apostolic Bishop of Methodism afterwards declared the word of life, amidst the competing voices of "the Jack Tars, and boys in the street." "Mine was the loudest," says the Bishop; "there was fire in the smoke; *we shall yet have a work in Boston*."

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* Concise History, &c., p. 9.

The inconveniences attending their present place of worship led them "to a resolution," continues the Record, "in the year 1794 — though then, as it were, in their infancy,— to set about building a house for the Lord." "Subscriptions," were attempted, for the purpose. Lee, who had so faithfully and perseveringly braved the difficulties which opposed them, raised in the South and in the month of August, 1795, put into their treasury upwards of four hundred dollars. Subsequent additions made the amount from the South about 520 dollars. They were encouraged to proceed, and on the 5th September, 1795, they purchased a lot of land on what was afterwards called Methodist Alley, and is now known as Hanover Avenue. The society was but forty-two in number at the time. The biographer of Lee says that "On the 28th of August he had the pleasure of assisting, with all due solemnities, in laying the corner stone of this building."* It was a wooden structure, forty-six feet by thirty-six. The Rev. George Pickering dedicated it amidst the thanksgivings and grateful tears of the infant church, on the 15th of May, 1796.

"And now," says the Record, "the troubled and persecuted society found, in some degree, rest to their souls." Their chapel was, however, but partially finished, and uncomfortably furnished. Not until 1800, could it be said to be completed. Many debts also embarrassed it; "but that God," continues the Record, "who superintends the affairs of his children, and who hath in a very eminent manner led this little flock from the very beginning unto the present, in this, their day of trouble, appeared in their behalf." In March, 1794, Col. Amos Binney joined them. He was a man of a most generous spirit, and of extraordinary business abilities, which afterwards raised him to opulence. The doctrines of Methodism were congenial with his liberal and practical mind. He courageously cast his lot among the members of the new society, in their day of trial, and by his talents and liberality conducted them through their present struggles, and subsequently through still severer ones, until he had the happiness of seeing Methodism established permanently in Boston.*

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*Chap. XIV. This date disagrees with that of the purchase of the land. We give the latter from the church records, and receive it as correct.

The old frame building in Hanover Alley has witnessed wonderful displays of the saving grace of God, and the ministrations of many of the greatest men in the history of Methodism. Hundreds of souls have been renewed there, and the few that still linger from those days among the mass of Boston Methodists, are distinguished for their steadfast zeal, their exemption from antiquated prejudices, and a beautiful blending of the mature wisdom of age with the undimmed piety of their youth. Its walls have echoed the voices of Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, Lee, Hedding, Pickering, Broadhead, Merwin, Ostrander, Wells, Dr. Sargent, Kibby, Webb, and other similar worthies. It was used until 1828, when the congregation retired to a new temple, on North Bennet street. Afterwards, it was for several years the scene of the labors of Rev. Edward T. Taylor, in behalf of seamen. It has since been removed to Causeway street, where it retains its original size and form. It is revered by the Methodists of Boston, as a venerable, though humble monument of the struggles of their fathers.

A minute account of the subsequent advancements and chapels of Methodism of Boston, would engross too much of our room. We are compelled, therefore, to refer to them but briefly.

The corner-stone of BROOMFIELD STREET CHAPEL was laid by Rev. Peter Jayne, April 15th, 1806, and dedicated the November following, by Rev. S. Merwin. It is built of brick, and measures eighty-four by fifty-four. In the middle course of hammered stone, in the foundation, is a block taken from the celebrated Plymouth rock. There were two hundred and thirty-seven Methodists in the city at the time. The present number at Broomfield street is between six hundred and seven hundred. This church had to pass through the severest struggles, in its early days. It was burdened with formidable debts. The efforts of Col. Binney, and collections made in the Middle States, by Rev. George Pickering, combined with the utmost endeavors of its members, retrieved it, and it has since become the most efficient body of Methodists in New England, ready for every good word and work, firmly conservative in respect to the genuine principles of Methodism, and as strongly inaccessible to the novelties of innovators.

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* Col. Binney was instrumental in founding the church at Lechmere Point, and was one of the most liberal founders of the Wesleyan Academy, at Wilbraham.

The BENNET STREET CHAPEL is one of the finest Methodist edifices in the city. It was built for the accommodation of the church which had worshipped in Hanover avenue. The Rev. Stephen Martindale dedicated it, in 1828. It has been the scene of many extensive revivals, and most of the later churches in the city have been formed by detachments from it. Its present membership is three hundred and twenty-five.

CHURCH STREET CHURCH was the fourth Methodist chapel opened in the city. The writer had the honor of dedicating it, on the 4th of July, 1834. About twenty-five members were received at once from other churches. It has steadily increased, and now reports nearly four hundred members.

RUSSELL STREET CHURCH sprung from Church street. We well remember the cold, wintry day on which we preached the first sermon, at the Wells School House, Blossom street.

The church was organized under the pastoral care of Rev. M. L. Scudder, in 1837, and consisted of sixty members. The new house was dedicated in 1838. It has recently been renewed and enlarged. Its membership, as reported in 1836, was two hundred and twenty-six.

The SOUTH BOSTON CHURCH, also, sprung from Church street. We preached the first sermon, in an "upper chamber," seated with planks, and including, perhaps, fifteen persons. They removed soon to "Harding's Hall," and formed a society of six members. In 1836, they removed to "Franklin Hall," with seventeen members, and left it in 1840, with one hundred and three. The chapel, which is one of the finest in that part of the city, was dedicated by Rev. E. T. Taylor, June 17th, 1840. It is of the Gothic style, and seats about four hundred and fifty persons: present membership, two hundred and four. The vigorous young church at Roxbury also arose from Church street, but does not pertain to the present sketch.

The RICHMOND STREET CHURCH was detached from the congregation at Bennet street. It was formed by Rev. J. Sanborn, in a hall on Merrimack street, in 1841, and consisted of forty-two members. Its chapel was dedicated by Bishop Morris, during the session of the New England Conference in Boston, in 1842. It reports one hundred and thirty-two members.

The MAY STREET CHAPEL is occupied by the colored Methodists of the city, who are blessed with the labors of the Rev. Samuel Snowdon, an excellent man of their own color. It was gathered in 1818.

The BETHEL CHAPEL, in North Square, is owned by the Boston Port Society. The labors of Rev. Mr. Taylor, in the old Methodist chapel on Hanover avenue, were so successful among his brother seamen, that the liberality of the citizens of Boston, and others, was so far enlisted in their behalf as to afford the generous sum of twenty-eight thousand dollars for the erection of the present substantial edifice. It is entirely of brick, except the basement, which is of unhammered Quincy granite. The dimensions are eighty-one by fifty-three feet, and afford accommodations for one thousand five hundred persons. It is crowded every Sabbath. The Bethel originated with the Boston Methodists, and its pulpit is subject to the New England Conference. A spacious Seaman's Boarding House, Sunday and week-day schools, a store for seamen, and various auxiliary means of usefulness among them, have been thoroughly organized by the exertions of Mr. Taylor, and are effecting much good.

The EAST BOSTON CHURCH originated as a branch of the Bennet Street Society. Rev. H. B. Skinner, and Rev. J. W. Merrill, successively labored there till the Conference of 1842, when it was recognized as a distinct church, and Rev. D. Richards appointed its pastor. A fine brick chapel has been erected for the accommodation of the East Boston brethren. They reported at the last Conference, one hundred and forty members.

A new church has been organized under the care of Rev. B. K. Peirce, on Canton street. It meets in a hall, and numbers sixty members.

Thus has the germ planted by the early Methodists, and watered with their tears, in Methodist Alley, grown into strength, and spread out, until its richly laden branches drop their divine fruit on nearly all points of the city, and on the waters of the harbor. What hath God wrought! A writer in the Herald and Journal, at the time of the Semi-Centenary Anniversary of Methodism in Boston, (1842,) says that,

> "Within these fifty years we have established nine churches; their increase has been at the rate of one in five and a half years — a re-

markable success, considering our poverty, and other obstacles. It is clear that the same inextinguishable energy which is carrying forward Methodism elsewhere is at work here also. From the fifteen members reported in the Minutes for 1792, we have grown to two thousand six hundred and fifty. Our greatest success is, however, recent. Six of these churches have originated within nine years; and we ought also to add those of Roxbury and Chelsea, for they originated with the city brethren, and are immediately contiguous to us. Including those of the city alone, we have increased within the last nine years at the rate of one church in eighteen months; adding those of Roxbury and Chelsea, the rate of increase has been one in thirteen and a half months. This exceeds the progress of any other denomination in the city, and we doubt whether the Methodist church in any other city of the nation equals it."

It is interesting to observe the slow growth of the church in its earlier years, those hard times when our fathers showed their energy as much by their patience as by their zeal. Any ordinary men would have retired from the field discouraged. Let us look at the statistics. We give the number for each year:

| Year. | Members. | Increase. | Year. | Members. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1792 | 15 | | 1795 | 42 decrease 7 |
| 1793 | 41 | 26 | 1796 | 65 increase 23 |
| 1794 | 49 | 8 | | |

Let us pause at this first period of five years. While their subsequent growth has been extraordinary, their early tardiness was perhaps equally so. Here is an example of patience for all our young and toiling churches; five years spent in gaining sixty-five members! an annual average of thirteen — and this in a large city, and by one of the holiest and most energetic bands of Methodists ever organized. The next six years are still more striking:

| Year. | Members. | Year. | Members. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1797 | 79 increase 14 | 1800 | 70 decrease 4 |
| 1798 | 86 “ 7 | 1801 | 75 increase 5 |
| 1799 | 74 decrease 12 | 1802 | 66 decrease 9 |

In these last six years, then, they had gained but *one;* and in the eleven of their existence, they had gained but *sixty-five*, at an annual average of *less than six!* The remaining years, down to 1830, exhibit a like slow advancement. It would be interesting to our readers to examine them, but our limits will not allow it. We can only give periods of five years each, dating from the last above, and extending to the Semi-Centenary year, 1842:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1807, | they were | 249 | | | |
| 1812, | “ | 287 | gain | in five years, only | 38 |
| 1817, | “ | 403 | “ | “ | 116 |
| 1822, | “ | 680 | “ | “ | 277 |
| 1827, | “ | 645 | loss | “ | 35 |
| 1832, | “ | 788 | gain | “ | 143 |
| 1837, | “ | 1269 | “ | “ | 481 |
| 1842, | “ | 2650 | “ | “ | 1381 |

It will be seen that they more than *quadrepled* in the last fifteen years given; more than *trebled* in the last ten; and more than *doubled* in the last five.

One remark more. It will be observed that down to 1832 their growth was quite regular and moderate, but in the following periods of five years they rose at once and most rapidly, breaking out on the right and on the left, and more than trebling their numbers in ten years. What caused the change? It was the “colonizing spirit,” that began among them about 1834. It first produced Church Street, and thence have flowed streams that refresh most of the city. Russell Street, South Boston, Chelsea, Richmond Street, Roxbury, East Boston, and Canton Street charges, have all resulted from the impulse given to Methodism by the opening of Church Street chapel. There is a lesson taught us by the fact, but it is too manifest to need comment.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## CONFERENCES IN NEW ENGLAND IN 1794.

Lynn Conference of 1794 — Asbury at Cranston — New London — Springfield — Enfield — Wilbraham Conference — Interest of the occasion — Preachers present — Sermons of Asbury and Lee — Sabbath Exercises — Power of Lee's Eloquence — Appointments.

The Conference commenced in Lynn, July 25, 1794. Another session had been appointed for the accommodation of the preachers in the western portion of New England, who, therefore, were not present at the one in Lynn. We have scarcely any information respecting the latter. Asbury has recorded but about half a dozen lines respecting it, and no intimation whatever of its business, except that difficulties had arisen which grieved him deeply, and rendered its termination grateful to his wounded feelings. He preached before the Conference and the Society of Lynn twice on the Sabbath, and departed for the Wilbraham session the next morning, passing, with his usual rapidity, through Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, Milton, Stoughton, and Easton, a distance of forty miles, the same day.

On Tuesday, 29th, he rode through Attleborough to Providence. "I had," he says, "no freedom to eat bread, or drink water in that place. I found a calm retreat in Gen. Lippett's, where we can rest ourselves: the Lord is in this family; I am content to stay a day, and give them a sermon."

His unfavorable allusion to Providence refers to the conduct of a local preacher from Ireland, who had compromised (as the Bishop supposed) his Methodistic principles in an arrangement with some Congregational citizens, by which the few friends of Methodism in the town were absorbed into a new Congregational society, still known there as the "Benificent Congregational church."

On the 1st of August he left his comfortable retreat at General Lippett's for New London, where Mr. Roberts, who accompanied him, preached the next day. On the following day the Bishop "made his appearance in the court-house, and preached to about seven hundred people with considerable freedom." They continued here over the Sabbath, and held a Love-Feast in the upper room of the court-house, "where," he says, "some spoke feelingly; our sermon and sacrament took up three hours." "God," he exclaims, "is certainly among these people;" and, he adds, "We have set on foot a subscription to build a house of worship, and have appointed seven trustees." The infant church of New London was destined, however, to be strengthened by trials before their temple could rise with the shout of "Grace, grace unto it." Nearly four years elapsed before it was opened.*

"Monday 5th," he remarks, "was one of the warmest days we have known. We left New London and came through Norwich, twelve miles; we passed Windham and Mansfield. We were met by a powerful thunder gust; but stepping into a house, escaped its effects. The heat was excessive, and we had no shade, except now and then a spreading tree: our horses were as though they had been rode through a brook of water. We purchased our dinner on the way, and it was sweet: we labored hard till eight o'clock, and came sick and weary to father P——s, not less, in my judgment, than forty miles.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, p. 198.

Thursday, 7th. A day of rest and affliction of body: came to Tolland very unwell. I find my soul stayed upon God in perfect love, and wait his holy will in all things.

Saturday, 9th. I preached in a school-house at the north end of Tolland, and had the house filled.

Sunday, 10th. Brother R——, though sick, went to Coventry, and I was left alone at Tolland, where I preached in the forenoon on Acts 2: 37, 38, with some freedom; and in the afternoon on Colos. 2: 6, and found it heavy work. After meeting I was taken with a dysentery, (attended with great sinking of bodily powers,) which held me most of the night. Monday I was better, and preached in a school house at Ellington. I felt great dejection of spirit, but no guilt or condemnation."

He was now in the region of the "Association," which had arrayed itself against Methodism, under the leadership of Rev. Messrs. Williams and Huntington. "Ah!" he exclaims, "here are the iron walls of prejudice; but God can break them down. Out of fifteen United States, thirteen are free; but two are fettered with ecclesiastical chains — taxed to support ministers, who are chosen by a small committee and settled for life. My simple prophecy is, that this must come to an end with the present century." He was too sanguine, the ecclesiastical oppressions of Connecticut were not abolished till 1816, and his own sons in the ministry had no unimportant agency in effecting their removal.

Notwithstanding his continual labors he remarks,

"It is well for me that I am not stretching along, while my body is so weak, and the heat so intense; brother Roberts is with me, and we both only do the work of one man in public. I heard —— read a most severe letter from a citizen in Vermont, to the clergy and Christians of Connecticut, striking at the foundation and principle of the hierarchy, and the policy of Yale College, and the Independent order. It was expressive of the determination of the Vermonters to continue free from ecclesiastical fetters: to follow the Bible, and give liberty, equal liberty, to all denominations of professing Christians. If so, why may not the Methodists (who have been repeatedly solicited) visit these people also."

In less than a month he had dispatched a preacher (Joshua Hall) to visit these people, but untoward circumstances prevented the prosecution of the mission.

He hastened forward. On Tuesday, 12th, he says:

"I rode over the rocks to the Square Ponds, and found our meeting-house as I left it two years ago, open and unfinished. We have here a few gracious souls: I preached on Luke 13: 24; and lodged with brother C——, who was exceedingly kind to man and horse.

"Wednesday, 13th. Came to brother M——'s, on a branch of the Alemantick. Our friends and the people in North Stafford had appointed for me to preach in Mr. —'s meeting-house: to this I submitted, but it was not my choice: I was loud, plain, and pointed, on Rom. 8: 6, 7. Mr. —— was present, and after meeting, kindly invited me to his house. I went beyond my strength at brother M——'s; we had a crowd of hearers, and some melting among the people. I felt myself so moved that I could not be calm. I gave them a sermon in West Stafford, on Heb. 3: 12, 13, 14. I am awfully afraid many in these parts have departed from the love, favor, and fear of God. I was led to treat particularly on unbelief, as the soul-destroying sin.

"Saturday, 16th. I rode up the hills, where we had some close talk; I observed there was good attention, and some melting in the congregation. I came to L. S.'s; here some of the young people are with us, and the old people prefer hearing the Methodists preach to the hearing of sermons read.

"Sunday 17th. I came to the new chapel in Wilbraham, forty by thirty-four feet, neatly designed. I was unwell, and under heaviness of mind. I preached to about four hundred people, who were very attentive, but appeared to be very little moved. The standing order have moved their house into the street, not far from ours; and they think, and say, they can make the Methodist people pay them; but I presume in this they are mistaken."

On Wednesday, 20th, he visited Springfield. He gives us the outline of his sermon there, on Acts 2: 22. It is a specimen of the invariable simplicity and perspicuity of his discourses. "I showed, 1. What we must be saved from; 2. That we cannot save ourselves; 3. On whom we must call for salvation; 4. That whosoever thus calls on the name of the Lord, without distinction of age, nation, or character, shall be saved."

On Friday, 22d, he arrived at Enfield, "a capital town," he says. He tarried there over the Sabbath, and preached from Acts 5: 29, 33. "We had," he writes, "a solemn sacrament; but O! my soul is distressed at the formality of these people. Brother Roberts preached in the afternoon to a crowded house, and at five o'clock I had to preach to a few sermon-stupified hearers of different denominations. Oh my Lord! when wilt thou again visit the people of this place."

Tuesday, 26th, he rode twelve miles to Wapping. He says:

> "I was happy to have an opportunity of retreating a little into much loved solitude at Capt. S———'s, a man of good sense and great kindness. I had some enlargement on Isai. 55: 6, 9, and was enabled to speak with power and demonstration. I preached at T. S———'s barn: my spirits were sunk at the wickedness of the people of this place. My subject was Isai. 64: 1, 7. O what mountains are in the way! Idolatry, superstition, prejudice of education, infidelity, riches, honors, and the pleasures of the world. Ver. 7: "None calleth." Prayer of every kind is almost wholly neglected. "That stirreth up himself." Oh! how might men address their own souls: as, O! my soul, hast thou had conviction, penitence, faith, regeneration? Art thou ready to enter the unseen, unknown state of happiness, and stand before God? or wilt thou be content to make thy bed in hell?
>
> "I lodged at the oldest house in Windsor, with another brother S—–, not unlike the captain. Notwithstanding his certificate from the Methodists, he has been taxed to pay a ministry he heareth not. I can scarcely find a breath of living, holy, spiritual religion here, except amongst a few women in East Hartford. If there should continue to be peace in America, yet I am afraid that God will punish the people himself for their wickedness.
>
> "Saturday, 30th. We were called upon to baptise a child, which Mr. ——— refused to do, because the parents owned the covenant and have now broken it. This is the way to bind people to the good old church.
>
> "Sunday, 31st. My affliction of body and mind was great at Spencertown, yet I had a solemn time in preaching in the new tabernacle to about four hundred people on Luke 24: 45, 48. After an hour's recess we came together again, and some were offended, and others convicted, while I enlarged on "The promise is to you and your children." I was in public exercise about five hours, including the sacrament, and was so outdone with heat, labor, and sickness, that I could take but little rest that night."

On September 2d, he reached Wilbraham, Mass., "still weak in body," and lodged with Abel Bliss, Esq. On

Thursday, 4th, was commenced the Wilbraham Conference. The little band of disciples in the village, who had succeeded in erecting a sanctuary, were eminently comforted and profited by this "holy convocation" of the devoted pioneers of Methodism in New England. As the latter arrived with their horses and saddle-bags, from all directions, dusty and wearied by long journeys, but joyful with cheering reports of the work of God, they were welcomed in the name of the Lord into the new temple, and to hospitable hearths and bountiful tables. The brethren in Wilbraham needed the inspiriting influence of such an assembly. They had struggled for every inch of their progress thus far; they had erected their chapel amidst determined hostility, and several of their principal members had been carried away and thrust into prison for refusing to support a creed which their consciences rejected. Cheering, then, was it for them to behold the faces and hear the voices of the indomitable champions of Methodism, who were "turning the world upside down."

The Wilbraham Conference was one of the most interesting in our early history. Great men were there, — Asbury, wayworn, but "mighty through God," — Lee, eloquent, tireless, and panting, like Coke, for "the wings of an eagle and the voice of a trumpet, that he might proclaim the gospel through the East and the West, the North and the South," —Roberts, as robust and noble in spirit as in person, —Wilson Lee, "a flame of fire," — Ostrander, firm and unwavering as a pillar of brass, — Pickering, clear and pure as a beam of the morning, — young Mudge, the beloved first-born of the New England Itinerancy, — the two Joshuas of Maine, Taylor and Hall, who, like their ancient namesake, led the triumphs of Israel in the land of the East,— and others whose record is on high.

Such were the men present. The exercises were what might have been expected from such evangelists, — dispatch of business, incessant public devotions, and daily preaching. "Friday, 5th," says Asbury, "we had a full house, and hastened through much business." The same day, Lee, on his route from the Lynn Conference to New Hampshire, arrived, "sat with them, and attended preaching at night." Saturday was a great day; Lee, Roberts and Asbury preached — the three principal men of the occasion. The Bishop's discourse was on Mal. 3: 1, 4: "*Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and judge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.*" He treated on "the coming and work of John the Baptist; the coming, work and doctrine of Christ, and his changing the ordinances and priesthood with the ministry and discipline of the church."

At 11 o'clock Lee ascended the pulpit, and closed the morning session by a powerful sermon, full of encouragements to preachers and people, from II. Cor. 12: 9: "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*" "The power of the Lord," writes the great evangelist, "was amongst us." He was profoundly affected himself, few men indeed had better tested the promise by experience. He wept, and the sympathetic emotion spread through the assembly, till there was sobbing and ejaculations in all parts of the house. "I felt," he says, "the grace of God sufficient for me at the time, and I was willing to trust him all the days of my life. O! what a precious sense of the love of Jesus my soul enjoyed at that time! Let the worldling boast of pleasure, I will not envy his happiness; give me the love of Jesus, and I desire no more."

Sunday was a jubilee day. The services commenced at 8 o'clock, A. M. The first hour was spent in prevailing prayer, and in singing the rapturous melodies of the great Poet of Methodism, the doggerels of later days having not yet come into vogue. Asbury then mounted the pulpit, and addressed the throng; appealing to the ministry, like a veteran general to his hosts on the eve of battle; calling on them to "put on the whole armor of God," and "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Conflicts were before them, but their weapons were "mighty through God," and their brethren were moving on to the victory through the land. Many might fall, but it would be amidst the slain of the Lord, and with the shout of triumph.

After a stirring discourse, he descended the pulpit and consecrated, by our impressive service, four young men to the militant ministry of the Itinerancy — three as Elders, one as Deacon. Preachers and people then crowded around the altar, and with solemnity and tears commemorated the sufferings of their Lord. Lee's ardent spirit was moved within him, for to him it was a "solemn time," "quickening" and refreshing.

The assembly was dismissed, but the people withdrew only for a few minutes. They again thronged the house, and were addressed in a series of exhortations by Lee, Amos G. Thompson and Joel Ketchum. The exhortation of Lee is spoken of to this day as an example of overwhelming eloquence. "The crowd," says one who heard it,* "moved under it like the forest under a tempest." "It was a time of God's power," says Lee. Stout hearts broke under the word, the fountain of tears was opened, there was weeping in all parts of the house; the emotion at last became insupportable, and the overwhelmed assembly gave vent to their uncontrolable feelings in loud exclamations. The eloquent man of God addressed all classes, "1, sinners; 2, mourners in Zion; 3, Christians; 4, backsliders; 5, young people; 6, the aged; and lastly, ministers." The services finally closed after continuing seven hours and a half. "It was," exclaims Lee, "a blessed day to my soul."

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* Rev. Enoch Mudge.

The Conference was publicly concluded amidst this deep interest; the preachers immediately mounted their horses and were away for their new fields, without tarrying for meals. Ten or twelve of them, with Asbury in their midst, passed on rapidly to Enfield, "where," says the Bishop, "I got my dinner at seven o'clock in the evening." Lee's soul was yet on fire from the exercises at Wilbraham, and though he had taken neither dinner or tea that day, except a crust of bread which he had begged at a door on the route and ate on horseback, yet, after "eating a little," he went with Roberts to the meeting-house in Enfield, where the people were waiting, and admonished them to reckon themselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" — Rom. 6:11. "It was a profitable time," he says, "to my soul." He "felt the power of the Lord," and had "freedom in preaching." Roberts followed with an exhortation, and thus closed "the last day — that great day of the Feast."

Asbury hastened away to attend the New York Conference, passing through Middletown, where he "was taken ill," and Stratford, where he "had a little meeting, though heavy, sick, and sleepy," through fatigue. At one place on his route, calls came to him to send preachers into New Hampshire and Maine, and at another he met the devoted Dunham, one of the pioneers of Methodism in Canada, who had come to beseech him to send additional laborers into that opening region. Thus the field was enlarging in all directions, and whitening unto the harvest.

The New England appointments, made chiefly at the Lynn and Wilbraham Conference, for the year 1794–5, were as follows: Jesse Lee, *Elder; New Hampshire*, Joshua Hall; *Needham*, Amos G. Thompson, to change in three months; *Boston*, Christopher Spry, to change in three months; *Lynn*, Evan Rogers, to change in three months; *Marblehead*, John Hill, J. Rexford, to change in three months, J. Ketchum; *Fitchburg*, Thomas Coope; *Orange*, George Cannon; *Readfield*, Philip Wager. George Roberts, *Elder; Greenwich*, Joseph Lovel; *Warren*, John Chalmers; *New London*, Wilson Lee, David Abbott, Zadock Priest, Enoch Mudge; *Middletown*, Menzies Rainor, Daniel Ostrander; *Litchfield*, Fredus Aldridge, James Covel; *Tolland*, Lemuel Smith, George Pickering; *Granville*, Joshua Taylor; *Vermont*, Joshua Hall; *Fairfield*, Zebulon Kankey, Nicholas Snethen; *Pittsfield*, John Crawford, David Brumley. The last mentioned Circuit was included within a District which lay mostly in the State of New York, under the superintendence of Freeborn Garrettson.

The new ecclesiastical year began with *two* Districts and part of a third, *eighteen* Circuits and Stations, and *thirty* preachers; — four Circuits and five preachers more than in the preceding year. The names of New Hampshire, Vermont, Fitchburg, Orange and Readfield, appear, for the first time, in the Minutes, the latter being substituted for "the Province of Maine," as recorded in the Minutes of the preceding year.

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

Sketches of Preachers — Christopher Spry — Evan Rogers — Thomas Coope — George Cannon — Methodism at Provincetown — John Chalmers — Zebulon Kankey — Wilson Lee — Power of his Ministry — Remarkable Incident — John Crawford — David Brumley — Nicholas Snethen — His History — Secession — Ecclesiastical System of Methodism.

Of the thirty preachers, named in the list of appointments for the year 1794–5, eighteen had previously occupied New England Circuits. What information we have been able to collect respecting them, has already been given; of the remaining twelve, we submit a few brief notices.

Christopher Spry came to New England in one of those frequent detachments of laborers which the Baltimore Conference (or what then was virtually, though not nominally, the Baltimore Conference) dispatched to the help of Lee. He commenced his Itinerant labors on Somersett Circuit, Md., in 1787, and from that year till 1794, travelled successively Annamessex, Northampton, Dover, Kent, Queen Ann's and Caroline Circuits, all within the region of that Conference. In 1794, he was sent by Asbury to the East, with John

Chalmers, Evan Rogers and George Cannon. His first New England appointment was at Boston. In 1795, he travelled the Tolland Circuit with Nicholas Snethen, who has since attained a marked, though not an enviable record in the history of the church. In 1796, Mr. Spry returned to Maryland, and was appointed to the office of Presiding Elder, which he sustained during five years, having under his superintendence, men whose names are distinguished in the annals of the church; among them were William Beauchamp, Solomon Sharp, John Harper, Alexander McCaine, Philip Bruce, Thos. Morrell, and several also of the noble band who had gone from the Baltimore Conference, to aid the first struggles of Methodism in New England, but had returned, among whom were Dr. Roberts, Wilson Lee, John Bloodgood, Zebulon Kankey, Fredus Aldridge, &c. On retiring from his District, in 1801, he travelled Queen Ann's Circuit; the following two years he labored respectively on Chestertown and Calvert Circuits, and in 1804 passed into the local ranks. "He was esteemed in New England," says a correspondent, "for his excellent Christian and ministerial character. He was then a man of discreet and substantial, rather than strong qualities. He commanded the respect of those who knew him, and performed good service to the church, during the short time he was in these parts. He was a tall, plain man; a sound, useful preacher." *

Evan Rogers commenced his Itinerant ministry within the Baltimore Conference in 1790, a year in which a host of New England pioneers began their ministerial travels, including Pickering, Cannon, Aldridge, Lovell, Christie, Rainor, &c. His first Circuit was Millford, Del. He subsequently travelled, in successive years, Talbot (as colleague of Shadrach Bostwick, afterwards a distinguished laborer in New Eng-

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* Letter of Rev. E. Mudge to the Writer.

land,) and Wilmington Circuits. In 1794 he came to the East and was stationed at Lynn; the ensuing two years, he labored respectively on Middletown Circuit, as colleague of Joel Ketchum, and Tolland Circuit as colleague of Thos. Coope. He located in 1797,[*] a year in which a number of names belonging to the annals of New England Methodism were transferred to the local list; among them were those of Cannon, Covel, Woolsey, Aldridge, and Chalmers. He was educated a Quaker, and his subsequent life was marked by the sobriety and precision of that sect. "He was," says one of his companions in labor, "a pleasant, serious man, a good preacher, gentlemanly in his deportment and made a favorable impression at first sight."[†]

THOMAS COOPE'S first appointment was at Fitchburg, Mass., in 1794; the next year he travelled Orange Circuit, in the same State, and the year following was colleague of Evan Rogers, on Tolland Circuit. In 1797, he is recorded as expelled; the first case of expulsion in the New England Methodist Ministry.

GEORGE CANNON joined the Itinerant Ministry in 1790, and was appointed to Clarksburgh Circuit, in the north western part of Virginia, then within the Baltimore Conference; he subsequently travelled the Randolph and Fairfax Circuits, (two years on the latter,) and in 1794, came to the East and labored on the Orange (Mass.) Circuit. The following year, he was stationed at Provincetown; the present vigorous Methodist church in that town was formed during this year. Soon after Mr. Cannon's appointment, a mob destroyed the timber collected for the erection of a chapel, and tarred and feathered the preacher in effigy. Neither the society nor its pastor, however, succumbed to this extreme hostility, but provided new timber, (a costly article at Provincetown, where it can be had only by importation,) erected their temple, and in about four months entered it with songs of praise.

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[*] Not 1795, as stated in Bangs' Alphabetical Catalogue.

[†] Letter of Rev. E. Mudge to the Writer.

In 1796, Mr. Cannon was stationed at Marblehead, and the next year located. He afterwards removed to Nantucket where he introduced Methodism. But the abandonment of the ministry produced, in his case, the usual result of such deviations from duty — he became absorbed in secular cares, fell into doctrinal errors, and retired from the church. Frequently in his hoary age might this once useful man be seen trembling under the discourses of his old fellow laborers, in the midst of the church which he himself had formed. He clung, however, to his errors — a species of universalism — and was suddenly summoned to his final account; falling backwards, "his neck broke and he died."

JOHN CHALMERS was a native of Annapolis, Md. He remembered his Creator in the days of his youth, and began to preach in the local ministry at the early age of sixteen. He commenced his Itinerant labors in the Baltimore Conference, and was appointed to the Lancaster circuit, under the superintendence of Philip Bruce, in 1788, a year distinguished as the date of the commencement of the Itinerant ministry of John Bloodgood, John Lee, John Hill, John Allen, Robert Green, Lemuel Smith, David Kendall, and other early evangelist in New England. During the next five years he travelled, respectively, Fairfax, Kent, Severn, (with John Hill,) Frederick and Little York Circuits, all then within the range of the Baltimore Conference.

Inspired by the example of the many heroic Itinerants who had already left that prosperous section of the church to assist Lee in the harder fields of the East, he came hither himself in 1794. His first New England appointment was

Warren Circuit. He had the honor here of originating the first Methodist Chapel erected in the State of Rhode Island. Methodist preachers in those days, seldom tarried longer than one year at the same appointment, and their frequent transitions often, as we have seen, extended over distances which, in even these days of ready communication, would seem extraordinary. Mr. Chalmers' next movement (1795) was to Montgomery Circuit, Md., on the Potomac River. The following year he travelled Fairfax Circuit, Va., under Joshua Wells, (a name dear to many in New England,) and in 1797 located. His nine years of Itinerant labor were distinguished by " great acceptance and usefulness." In 1832, he was re-admitted to the Baltimore Conference, as a supernumerary, and appointed to Fairfax Circuit, the last he had travelled in the days of his vigor. His health failed rapidly, but he was returned to the same Circuit the next year ; he had not long arrived in the field of his labors, before he was compelled to retire to the home of a friend, in Montgomery Co., Md., to die. On the 3d of June, 1833, he departed to his rest, " full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and rests forever—his labors and his works do follow him." * His " last moments," say his brethren of the Baltimore Conference, " were such as might have been expected from a life like his. His intercourse with God, through the mediator, was uninterrupted, his peace undisturbed, his triumph complete. He was long and extensively known, highly appreciated as a pious man, and greatly beloved as an able and successful minister of Christ. Many were the seals of his ministry, some of whom entered the port of rest before him ; others remain to bless the church with their godly walk and conversation."

ZEBULON KANKEY began his Itinerant labors on Duchess

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* Minutes, 1834.

Circuit, N. Y., in 1792, under the superintendence of Freeborn Garrettson. The next year he was colleague of Moses Crane on Otsego Circuit, N. Y. In 1794, he entered New England, and travelled Fairfield Circuit, Conn., with Nicholas Snethen, the ensuing year he was the colleague of Lemuel Smith, on Granville Circuit, Mass., and in 1796, passed to the Baltimore Conference, and travelled Kent Circuit, Del., under the Presiding Eldership of Christopher Spry, his former fellow laborer in the East; the next year he was appointed to Cecil Circuit, and in 1798 located.

Wilson Lee was one of the most zealous, laborious, and successful Methodist preachers of his times. Thousands of stars bestud his crown of rejoicing in heaven. He was born in Sussex Co., Delaware, 1761, and entered the travelling ministry in 1784. The scene of his first years labors was the Alleghany Circuit, among the mountains of the Allegany ridge, in the westernmost county of Maryland. The ensuing two years he travelled respectively the Redstone (Va.) and Talbot (Md.) Circuits. In 1787, he penetrated to what was then the wilderness of the West, and labored on the Kentucky Circuit. He continued to travel in Kentucky and Tennesee during the next six years, laboring night and day, suffering great privations, and encountering the severest hardships. " It may be truly said," remark his colaborers,* " that Wilson Lee hazarded his life upon all the frontier stations he filled, from the Monongahela to the banks of the Ohio, Kentucky, Salt River, Green River, Great Barrens, and Cumberland River, in which stations there were savage cruelty and frequent deaths. He had to ride from station to station, and from fort to fort, sometimes with and at other times without a guard, as the inhabitants at those places and periods can witness." He left the West with a shattered constitution, in 1793, and travelled the Salem (N. J.) Circuit. He still panted, however, for the harder and more adventurous labors of the new fields into which Methodism was bearing its ensign; we accordingly find him, the next year, in New England, travelling New London Circuit, as colleague of Enoch Mudge, David Abbott, and Zadok Priest. Mr. Mudge says, "Wilson Lee was my senior on this Circuit, but owing to ill health was unable to fill all his appointments. He was distinguished for shrewdness, piety and correctness in his deportment. His penetrating eye saw the proper thing to be done, and when and how to do it. His administration of discipline, was prompt and proper. His zeal was unbounded, and he would not rest while it was possible for him to stir. When unable to be abroad, he would have class and prayer meetings at his lodgings. He was truly a *revival* preacher; his public discourses were full of rich experience, wholesome doctrine, pointed remarks, and practical theology."

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* Minutes, 1805.

The following reminiscences of one of Mr. Lee's visits to Middle Haddam, Conn., has been communicated to us by a veteran Methodist of that State, who has lived through our entire history.

"The first Methodist preacher that I had any knowledge of, was Wilson Lee. He was travelling on what was afterwards called Middletown Circuit, on the west side of the Connecticut River, when Elisha Day providentially heard him preach, and being favorably impressed with what he had heard, invited him to go over to Middle Haddam, and give the people a sample of Methodist preaching. Mr. Lee accepted the invitation, and his appointment was at the first house over the ferry.

"Mr. Lee attended at his appointment, and found a large assembly of curious hearers in an old stone house. His first prayer was novel in its brevity and fervency, for the people had been habituated to formal prayers of about forty minutes in length. After prayer, the preacher took from his pocket a little Bible, read his text, and closed the book. The people saw no note-book, and seeing the preacher fix his eyes on the congregation, instead of a book, their curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. All were now intent on what would follow.

The preaching was with the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. The human heart was skilfully dissected, and exposed in the light of truth, and the hearers trembled like aspen leaves. The remedy for sin was presented, in the atonement made for sin on the cross, by Jesus Christ, and offered freely to all men, without money and without price. Partial election and unconditional reprobation, were treated unceremoniously, and all were pressed to take the waters of life freely. During the discourse, the people trembled and wept; some fell to the floor and cried aloud for mercy, and some fled from the house and ran home, declaring that the devil was among the people in the stone house. When Mr. Lee saw the effect, he stood and cried, "Glory to God! he has come to New England." This meeting was the beginning of a gracious work of God in Middle Haddam, in which many souls were converted to God, under the ministry of Mr. Lee, who formed a class, and made it a Sabbath appointment for New London Circuit. It is now a station, with a new, handsome, and convenient chapel. Mr. Lee was one of those men who consider the world as their parish, and therefore was at war with the monopoly of the clergy of New England, and being a man of great faith, threw the shafts of truth successfully against whatever obstructed the work of God in the salvation of souls.

During Mr. Lee's labors in Middle Haddam, he was sick with fever, which brought him to the gate of death. It proved a great blessing to the class, by exhibiting his faith and patience on the verge of the grave, and his ardent prayers for his spiritual children. If it should be said that the Rev. Wilson Lee was not one of the "three" mighty men, I think none will deny him a place among the "thirty," for he was deeply pious, possessed of ardent zeal in the service of his Master, of unwavering faith, which rendered him a successful minister of the gospel, and a useful agent in planting the standard of Methodism in the land of the Puritans. Very few now remain of those who knew him as their pastor; in my acquaintance, there are only two aged sisters who were his spiritual children, and they are about to leave these mortal shores, to join him in the paradise of God. When I look back to more than half a century, and times and things as they then were, and compare those times with the present, I am constrained to say, "What hath the Lord wrought?" Then our Circuits were more than two hundred miles in circumference, with two preachers, and perhaps one small meeting-house; there are now more than twenty preachers, and as many large and convenient chapels, dedicated to the worship of Almighty God.*

This flaming herald of the truth was compelled, by his declining health, to seek a more genial climate. He left, however, a trail of light behind him, in New England. His departure was attended by remarkable circumstances, which resulted in the introduction of Methodism into Southold, Long Island, and which are thus recorded by the historian of Methodism :

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* Letter of Rev. J. Stocking to the Writer.

> "In 1794, a Mrs. Moore, who had been converted by the instrumentality of the Methodists, removed to Southold. Being destitute of a spiritual ministry, she united with two other females of a like spirit with herself, every Monday evening, in holding a prayer-meeting, in which they prayed especially that God would send them a faithful minister. Twice they met at the house of a Mr. Vail, who, though not a professor of religion, was willing that the meeting should be held in his house, as his wife was one of the three engaged in this pious work. A circumstance occurring one evening which caused them to omit their social meeting, each one retired to her own house, determined to pour out the desire of their souls to God, that the primary object of their prayers, namely, the gift of a faithful preacher, might be granted them. During the exercises of the evening, they felt an unusual spirit of prayer ; but more particularly Mrs. Moore, who continued in strong prayer until near midnight, when she received an assurance that God had heard them, by the following word being deeply impressed upon her mind: 'I have heard their cry and am come down to deliver them ;' and so strong was the conviction upon her mind that she praised God for what she believed he would most assuredly do.
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> "At this very time, Wilson Lee, one of the early Methodist preachers, was at New London, Connecticut, and had put his trunk on board of a vessel with a view to go to his appointment in New York. Contrary wind prevented his departure. On the same night in which these pious females were praying in their separate apartments on Long Island, for God to send them 'a shepherd after his own heart,' this man of God, detained by contrary winds in New London, felt an unusual struggle of mind for the salvation of souls, attended with a vivid and powerful impression that it was his duty to cross the Sound and go to Long Island. So powerful, indeed, was the impression, that, though he tried to resist it, he at length resolved that if a way opened he would proceed. On going to the wharf the next morning, he found, to his surprise, a sloop ready to sail for Southold, and without further hesitancy he immediately embarked : and on landing, in answer to his inquiries, was conducted to the house of Mrs. Moore. On seeing him approach the house, and recognizing him from his appearance for a Methodist preacher, though a total stranger, she ran to the door, and saluted him in the following words: 'Thou blessed of the Lord, come in!' They mutually explained the circumstances above narrated, and rejoiced together, 'for the consolation.' A congregation was soon collected, to whom Mr. Lee preached with lively satisfaction. God blessed

his labors — a class was formed, and from that period the Methodists have continued, with various degrees of prosperity, in Southold, and gradually spread through the length and breadth of the island."[*]

On his departure from New England, he was appointed to New York city, in 1795; the three subsequent years he labored in Philadelphia. In 1799, he travelled Montgomery, Md., Circuit; the next year he was supernumerary on the same Circuit, and during the ensuing three, superintended the Baltimore District. In 1804, he was returned as superannuated, and departed to his final rest the 11th of October, the same year, in Arundel County, Md. In April 1804, he was taken, while engaged in prayer with a sick person, with a heavy discharge of blood from his lungs. At his death a blood vessel of some magnitude, was supposed to break, so that he was in a manner suffocated by his own blood, in a few minutes. He possessed the sanctifying, as well as justifying grace of God; he distinguished himself by his administrative powers, as a Presiding Elder, as well as his overpowering abilities as a preacher, and his personal qualities as a Christian. "He was neat in dress," say the old Minutes, "affable in his manners, fervent in his spirit, energetic in his ministry, and his discourses were fitted to the character of his hearers. His constitution was very slender, but zeal for the Lord would urge him on to surprizing constancy and great labors."[†] "After full trial he has immortalized," says the same Record, "his ministerial, Christian, and Itinerant character." Jesse Lee says that "he professed to be a witness of the perfect love of God, for many years before he died. He was a very animating speaker, and spared no pains in trying to bring souls to God. In private conversation he was cheerful and solemn. He had a good talent in taking care of the church of God. A few months before he died, when he was so low that he could not speak louder than his breath, he said to me with great solemnity, 'I have given up the world; I have given up the church; I have given up all.'"[*]

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[*] Bangs' Hist. of Meth. Epis. Ch., vol. I., p. 300.

[†] Minutes of 1805.

David Abbott was admitted to the Itinerant ministry in 1781 and appointed to Kent Circuit, Md. The following two years he travelled Sussex, Del., and Fairfax, Va., Circuits. In 1784, he located; but re-entered the travelling ministry in 1793, and travelled Kent (Md.) Circuit. In 1794, he came to New England and labored on New London Circuit. His health being feeble, he soon retired, and disappears from the Minutes.

John Crawford began his Itinerant ministry on Colman's Patent Circuit, N. Y., in the year 1789. The three following years he travelled Columbia, Albany and Cambridge Circuits, N. Y. In 1793, he was reappointed to Albany, and the next year came to New England, as colleague of David Brumley, on Pittsfield Circuit. He located in 1795, but re-entered the Itinerancy in 1803, and labored on Ulster Circuit, N. Y. He subsequently travelled, successively, Albany, Delaware, Saratoga, Newburg, Haverstraw, Duchess, Albany, (two years,) Chatham, (two years,) Rhinebeck and Albany Circuits. In 1816, he was returned superannuated in the New York Conference, where he still remains, venerable with years, services and virtues.

David Brumley's name first appears on the Itinerant roll in 1794, when he was appointed the colleague of John Crawford, on Pittsfield Circuit. The next two years he was the colleague, respectively, of John Hill, on Greenwich Circuit, R. I., and Joel Ketchum, on Pomfret Circuit, Conn. The three following years, he travelled successively, Granville, Needham and New London Circuits. His three next appointments were Whittingham, Vt., Plattsburgh, N. Y., and Grand Isle, Vt. During the next three years, he was Presiding Elder on Ashgrove District, N. Y. In 1806, he was on Cambridge Circuit, N. Y., and the next year was returned among the located. He resumed the Itinerant work, however, in 1808, and travelled three years more on Fletcher and Brandon Circuits, Vt., when he again located, and disappears from the published records of the ministry.

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[*] Hist. of Methodism, p. 307.

NICHOLAS SNETHEN is a name of considerable note in the history of Methodism. He was born on Long Island, N. Y., 1769. His education was limited to the scanty instruction of the country school of the day, a considerable portion of his early life being spent on the sea, in charge of his father's vessels, in the flour trade. His subsequent application to books supplied, however, to some extent, the deficiency of his early studies. He acquired a competent knowledge of his own language and was able to use the Greek and Hebrew in their connection with Biblical exegesis. He was converted to God in his twentieth year, and preached his first sermon at the age of twenty-one.*

Mr. Snethen commenced his Itinerant labors in New England, in 1794, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. His first appointment was to Fairfield Circuit, as colleague of Zebulon Kankey. In 1795, he labored on Tolland Circuit, with Christopher Spry. The year following, he travelled the Vershire Circuit — the first projected in the State of Vermont. He has the honor of appearing in the Minutes as the first Methodist preacher formally appointed to that State. In 1797, he was sent to the Portland Circuit, with John Finnegan. The next year we miss him from the Minutes, owing, probably, to his removal southward. In 1799, he was appointed to Charleston, S. C., with John Harper. The following year he was in Baltimore, with Thomas Morrell, George Roberts, Philip Bruce, &c.—a phalanx of mighty men. In 1801–2, he travelled through the land with Asbury. In 1803, he was again in Baltimore, and the next two years in New York city, with Michael Coate, Samuel Merwin, Ezekiel Cooper, Freeborn Garrettson and Aaron Hunt. During the three ensuing years he was in the local ranks, but re-entered the Itinerancy in 1809, and spent two years in Baltimore, as colleague of Asa Shin and Robert Burch. The three following years he labored successively at Georgetown, Alexandria, and Frederick. In 1814, he again located, and retired to his estate in Frederick County, Maryland.

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* Methodist Protestant, Baltimore, July 12, 1845.

Amiable, talented and devoted, Mr. Snethen was nevertheless, versatile and restless. He twice retired from the Itinerancy to the local ranks, besides passing through transferences from north to south and south to north, remarkable in number and extent, even in that day of frequent and long transitions. Two years he travelled at large with Asbury, and his regular appointments ranged from Portland in Maine, to Charleston, South Carolina. At one time, he was the champion defender of Methodism ; at another, the most strenuous leader of schism. During the revolt of O'Kelly, he published an "Answer" to Mr. O'Kelly's "Vindication," in which he defended the church, and particularly Bishop Asbury, in language the most emphatic ; in 1828, he presided at the Convention of Seceders which assembled in Baltimore to organize the "Associated Methodist Churches," now known as the "Protestant Methodist Church ;" and during eight previous years he had been writing with great severity, (but we have no doubt, with equal sincerity,) anonymous attacks on the church, for whose prosperity he had so arduously labored.

The movement which resulted in the secession of 1828, commenced by the publication of the "Wesleyan Repository" in Trenton, N. J., in 1820, and was continued by the violent assaults of the "Mutual Rights," in Baltimore. Mr. Snethen was a frequent contributor to these periodicals. He subsequently published his articles in a volume, as also another work, in defence of his seceding brethren. He attended the Maryland State Convention, in 1827, and prepared the memorial to the next General Conference, which called forth the celebrated Report of Dr. Emory, on Lay Representation. He presided, as we have stated, at the Convention of 1828, which formed the Articles of Association for the new church, and was afterwards elected President of the Maryland Annual Conference District. In 1829, he emigrated to the banks of the Wabash, near Merom, Sullivan County, Indiana. Domestic bereavements induced him, subsequently, to remove to Louisville, Ky. He finally settled in Cincinnati, where he labored assiduously in the duties of the ministry. In May, 1838, he presided over the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, assembled at Alexandria, D. C. He also took a prominent part in the deliberations of the same body, at Pittsburgh, in 1838, and Baltimore, in 1842.

> "The last year or two of his life was spent," says his son, "in building up a new school in Iowa city, in the territory of Iowa. They called it the Snethen Seminary. He opened it in person, and returned to Cincinnati to prepare for it one hundred lectures, which he intended to have delivered with his own lips, the ensuing summer. He was on his way to Iowa city when he was taken ill at the residence of his son-in-law, Dr. Pennington, in Princeton, Indiana; where, after two months of great sufferings, he died on the 30th of May, 1845, magnifying and praising the Lord to the last moment of his life." *

Mr. Snethen was no ordinary man; his literary acquirements were highly respectable; in the pulpit he was eloquent

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* Extract from a letter in the Methodist Protestant, July 12, 1845.

and at times overpowering; in private life he was cheerful, sociable, and sympathetic — an unwavering friend, and a complete Christian gentleman.

There was a peculiarity in his mental constitution to which must be referred his unfortunate course (as we deem it) in respect to the church.

> "His philosophic mind," says one who knew him well, "delighted in theory. He theorized on every subject that came under his investigation; and most of his theories were ingenious, plausible and captivating, and bespoke a mind of vast compass, great originality, and intense application." *

With such a characteristic propensity, it is no matter of surprise that Mr. Snethen finally stumbled at the ecclesiastical system of Methodism. The polity of no other church, if, indeed, of any other community of men whatever, is more thoroughly practical or less theoretical; it presents an *Episcopacy* which is *Presbyterian*, a *pastorate* without *settlement*, a creed almost dangerously *liberal*, and yet the most *vigorously applied* in the pulpit, to be found among evangelical churches † — an *economy* thoroughly *missionary*, and yet almost entirely limited to *home operations* — a system, in fine, made up of the most energetic peculiarities and most marked contrasts — its contrasts being, however, but salutary counterparts. No system confers higher powers on its ministry, and yet none places its ministry in more utter subjection to popular control. No ecclesiastical officers, out of the papal hierarchy, have stronger executive functions than its bishops, and yet none have severer checks and restrictions.‡ It pretends to no theoretical foundation and no divine right, but is a result of Providential circumstances, and having operated more successfully than any other, and with as few, if not fewer abuses than any other, the practical good sense of its people have repelled all important innovations, convinced that it cannot be materially improved, and may be materially injured. They have agreed with a distinguished statesman, who, when questioned respecting the propriety of attempts at its improvement, said, "It is a noble machine, it works well — let it alone." *

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* Rev. J. R. Williams, in Meth. Prot., Baltimore, July 12, 1845.

† No church preaches more staunchly against Calvinism, Universalism, &c., and yet the opposite doctrines are no where directly stated in our "Articles of Religion."

‡ See "Tracts for the Times," No. II.: Binney & Otheman, Boston.

Methodism includes, practically, as much popular control as the genius of our civil system would justify, but, like all other ecclesiastical organizations of the land, it has deemed it unnecessary to conform the outlines of its government to the mere formularies of our civil system. To do so would require a transformation of nearly every technical detail of its economy, and such a general change of its established processes could not be effected but at the imminent risk of serious evils. Mr. Snethen and his associates attempted such a revolution, with what success we need not here say. However sincere his purpose, sad and affecting is the spectacle of a veteran evangelist — the associate of Lee in New England, the friend and travelling companion of Asbury, the able defender of the church against schism, the Itinerant who had travelled, suffered and labored, through most of the land, to lay the foundations and rear the walls of the church — sad and affecting the spectacle of such a one turning from it, and from the thinned ranks of his old fellow-laborers, to head a revolt which was to spread discord and rancor through the goodly brotherhood! Sad to see a man so good and so great, after a useful ministry of thirty years or more, spend the remaining years of his weary and declining life amidst the anxieties and reactions of an impracti-

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* Ex-President Van Buren — Zion's Herald, March 17, 1847.

cable experiment, and in conflict with the sympathies and precious memories of his earlier and better years! He mingles again, we doubt not, with his old Itinerant associates, in that blessed land where good men no longer "see through a glass darkly, but know even as also they are known," and where the best of them will discern errors enough in their past existence, to justify mutual sympathy and forgiveness.

Let us again turn our attention to the one whose noble figure, tallest among the giants of those days, is ever and anon reappearing on the scene before us, and who equalling, if not transcending any of them in labors and trials, was yet steadfast to the end.

# CHAPTER XIX.

## LEE AND ASBURY ITINERATING.

Lee at Coventry — Tolland — New London — Interview with Mudge and Stoneman at Norwich — Treatment in Rhode Island — General Lippett — Warren — Portsmouth — Attacks Calvinism at Waltham — Quarterly Meeting at Weston — Goes to Maine — First Society — First Methodist — Second Society — Chapel at Readfield — Presses forward — Incidents by the way — Tour in Rhode Island and Massachusetts — Revisits Maine — Asbury — Results of the Year.

We left Lee in the pulpit at Enfield, on the evening of the day which closed the Wilbraham Conference. His appointment for the ensuing year was to the office of Presiding Elder; his District comprehended, nominally, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine, but virtually, the whole Methodist interest in New England. A year of extraordinary travels and gigantic labors was before him, but influenced by a zeal as steady as it was vivid, he went forth upon it like the sun shining in his strength. He passed in a rapid flight, and with unremitting labors, through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Eastern Massachusetts, and far into the interior of Maine, amidst snow-drifts and wintry storms; back again through Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the Islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, and again through Massachusetts and Maine into the British Provinces, and back yet again to the interior of Connecticut. Apostolic man! whom Paul might have welcomed as a befitting fellow-laborer in overturning the universal strength of ancient heathenism.

On leaving Enfield, Wednesday 10th of September, he rode to Coventry, Conn., where he preached to a deeply affected and weeping audience. "The Lord," he remarks, "has dealt kindly with this people, and a great many have been awakened and converted." The next day he was at Tolland, where the feeble Methodist society, though still affected by the agitations of their opponents, had, nevertheless courageously reared an unfinished temple. He ascended its pulpit, and boldly defended the new movement from a very appropriate text in Luke's description of the persecutors at Thessalonica, Acts 17: 6, "*When they found them not they drew Jason and certain heathen unto the rulers of the city, crying, these that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.*" The following day he was preaching in the court-house at Windham, and the day after, arrived in New London, "and put up," he says, "with Brother Douglass. I found my mind a good deal engaged with God, and felt a longing desire to be more than ever given up to him."

He tarried over the Sabbath, and preached twice in the city, rejoicing at the prosperity of the society which had received, during a recent revival, more than fifty new converts to its communion. The next day he was again on his way. He paused at Norwich Landing, where he was cheered by the arrival of a new fellow-laborer, Jesse Stoneman, who had come from Western Virginia to join the pioneers of Methodism in New England. The youthful Enoch Mudge was also present to share the pleasure of the interview. They spent the day in conversation and devotions, and at night

Lee preached with great effect in a private house, to a large assembly. The power of God was manifest in their midst, and the word sped its way like lightning. "Glory be to God," exclaims the great Itinerant, "glory be to God forever. My soul was lost in wonder, love, and praise.—Brother Mudge exhorted, with a good degree of life and freedom; and the people seemed, by their looks, as if they were willing to receive the truth, and turn to God."

His course was still onward. The following day he passed rapidly to Coventry, R. I., where he met with one of those chilling receptions, which were among the most frequent and most discouraging trials of the first Methodist ministry in New England. He says:

> "I rode to Coventry, in Rhode Island, and being directed to call upon Colonel B., I rode up to his door about sunset—spoke with him, and asked him if he had not entertained the Methodist preachers sometimes. To which he replied, 'I have, sometimes.' 'Would you,' said I, 'be willing to entertain another?' He said, 'I would *full as leave*, if it would suit them as well, that they would go along.' Well, then, I told him I would *go along*. So I rode on, and got into a blind path by dark, and then, for the greater part of the way I could not see the path at all, and very often I could not see my horse's head. However, I arrived at General Lippett's, in Cranston, a little after they had got to bed, which was about ten o'clock. I missed my way a little, once. I had to depend upon God for protection, and to put a little trust in my horse, for he had been once that way before. Thank the Lord for all favors. The next day I tarried at friend Lippett's, and spent my time chiefly in the house, reading and writing. The General's wife and daughter professed to have been awakened by a sermon which I preached at their house. I felt my soul much humbled while I was talking to them on the subject. The next day I rode to Greenwich, and was assisted in preaching to a good company of hearers, on I. John, 3: 38. The Methodists have been laboring here some time, but have very few in society. I lodged at the widow Mumford's."

General Lippett's lady and daughter, both, were afterwards made partakers of the grace of God. The General himself soon shared with them the same blessing, and his house, like those of Sandford, in Redding, Bemis, in Waltham, and many others, became a bountiful retreat for the Itinerant evangelists of the time. He was a man of wealth, and most liberal hospitality; fifteen spare beds were kept in his spacious mansion, capable of accommodating thirty visitors, and often on quarterly-meeting occasions, fifty at least, found entertainment under his roof. He became a leader, steward and trustee, of the church, and built for it a chapel, on his own estate. The edifice still stands, though the birth and growth of many neighboring manufacturing towns have diverted away the population, and scattered the ancient society of Cranston into more recent, but more vigorous churches around.

On the 20th, Lee reached Warren, and found a cordial reception under the hospitable roof of Mr. Martin Luther. The next day was the Sabbath; he preached twice at Warren, and in the evening at Bristol. In the former village, he rejoiced to find a considerable society formed, a chapel raised, and "the top of it covered," — the first Methodist meeting-house, as we have seen, erected in the State of Rhode Island. He "found much of the divine presence" at Warren, and at Bristol "it was a good time to my soul," he says, "and a solemn time among the hearers. I felt willing to spend my life and my all for God, and for the good of precious souls."

On Monday he crossed the ferry to Portsmouth, and had "a most precious season in delivering his message," and at night met, with much pleasure, "the little class" which had been recently formed. On Wednesday, 24th, he dedicated the new church at Warren, and in a week after was again at his favorite resort, Lynn, where he spent two weeks, laboring day and night. On Monday, 13th October, he departed for Waltham Plains, where he preached to a crowded assembly in the school-house, from Isaiah 27: 11. His discourse was a blast against the moral stupidity of the dominant church, and the deadening influence of its theology. His text admitted of the full use of his peculiar powers. The gauntlet had been unceremoniously thrown down by the established clergy; they had arrayed themselves on all sides for the annihilation of the new comers. The latter, imbued with the liberal sentiments which prevailed in the section of the country from which most of them had come, spurned all restrictions on the rights of conscience and the rights of evangelical labor. They bore patiently the first hostilities, but at last boldly vindicated their doctrines, and returned the assault of their opponents with discommiting force and success. They attacked, unsparingly, the prevalent creed, until their assailants, generally, ceased the controversy, and the Genevan dogmas began to sink into that dormancy which now paralyses their influence throughout New England. But such discussions, however justifiable and needed, were but occasional with Lee. He had a nobler work, in the prosecution of which he still pressed forward. The day after his sermon at Waltham, he preached at Weston, before a quarterly meeting. Quarterly Conferences had already assumed in New England the importance and attraction which distinguished them elsewhere in the infancy of Methodism. The Presiding Elder's presence was more imposing than could be that of a whole bench of Bishops now-a-days. The vast extent of the Circuits rendered necessary a host of official members, — Leaders, Stewards, Trustees, Exhorters and Local Preachers — all, or most of whom, were brought together on these occasions. The two preachers of the Circuit — seldom meeting at other times — now spent a couple of days in mutual consultations and united labors, and the preachers of adjacent Circuits frequently crossed the lines and shared in the joys of the festival. The people flocked to it from places twenty, thirty, and even fifty miles distant. The village where it held its session was usually thronged with the multitude and their horses and carriages, and the principal families of the church, after days of preparation, threw open their doors and gladly welcomed their brethren. Saturday was spent in preaching and the usual ecclesiastical business, the intervals being well employed, in prayer-meetings and religious devotions, at the places of entertainment. Sunday was usually a great day — a love-feast was held early in the morning; preaching, the Lord's Supper, and prayer-meetings occupying the rest of the time. The scattered and feeble bands of Methodism, brought thus together, felt a consciousness of strength, expectation was alive, and faith gave energy to all the services; the preaching was distinguished for its power and effect; souls were often awakened and converted, and a rekindled zeal was carried back by the numerous visitors to their respective societies, spreading, not unfrequently, like a purifying fire, over the whole Circuit.

At the quarterly meeting at Weston, Lee preached on Phil. 3: 16. It was "a precious season and a melting time." Thos. Coope and A. G. Thompson were present; the former preached and the latter exhorted in the afternoon. Lee administered the Lord's Supper to the multitude, many of whom "were bathed in tears."

Though winter was approaching, and the Province of Maine was yet a "howling wilderness," he began to plan another incursion into it. After laboring about three weeks in the societies of Lynn and its vicinity, he set out, on the 3d of November, and reached Newburyport by night. On Friday the 7th, he was at Portland, and in the evening preached in the court-house on I. Tim. 5: 22, to a large and attentive throng. He found a home in the house of an hospitable Quaker, "friend Cobb," who, he says, "was quite reconciled to prayers morning and evening." He left Portland, not doubting "but what the Lord would yet favor this people."

> "Sunday, 9th," he says: "at Mr. Randall's, in Gray, I preached on Lam. 3: 22. I had liberty in preaching, and the people paid great attention. At 1 o'clock in the afternoon, I preached again, on Luke 11: 9. The words seemed to pierce the hearts of some of the hearers. They are seldom favored with preaching. Then I rode to New Gloucester, and preached at 4 o'clock. The people were not much moved by the sermon.
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> "Wednesday, 12th. At Mr. Sprague's, in Green, I preached at 2 o'clock; my text was, Phil. 2: 15. I had a small congregation, and but little life in speaking. I believe the text did not suit the state of the people, being mostly unacquainted with the power of religion. I then rode to Esq. Dearborn's, in Monmouth, and stayed all night. Was greatly delighted in hearing of many precious souls that had been awakened, and several that had been converted in the town, within a short time past. Surely, the Lord is saying to the North, give up. Amen, even so: come Lord Jesus."

Philip Wager was sent this year, as we have seen, to Maine — the first Methodist preacher appointed exclusively to that section of New England. Lee's delight at the good indications in Monmouth was enhanced by the arrival of Mr. Wager, who brought him the cheering news of similar manifestations of the Spirit in other parts of the country. After conversing and rejoicing over the prospects before them, they went forth to a neighboring town, where Lee preached and Wager exhorted, "with freedom," to a company of hearers who expected them; "the Lord," says the former, "moved upon the hearts of many." His joy was still more enhanced in meeting, after the sermon, *the first Methodist Class formed in Maine*, and hearing, "from the peoples' own mouths, what the Lord had done for their souls." This little band comprised fifteen members. It was organized "about the first of November, 1794." * The first lay Methodist in Maine was Daniel Smith, afterwards a local preacher. He died in peace, Oct. 10, 1846. Of his ten children, one is in heaven and nine on the way. Lee left the new society, praying that it might be as the little cloud, which at first was like a man's hand, but soon covered the heavens. They have grown, by our day, to more than 20,000 members, and nearly 300 preachers. His prayer is still prevailing.

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* Lee's Hist. of Meth., Anno 1794.

On Saturday, 15th, he reached Readfield, whither he was attracted by the recollections of his former cordial reception. Good news awaited him in that then remote wilderness; he found there the second Methodist society of Maine, recently formed — a people panting for the word of life and hanging on his ministrations with sobs and ejaculations; and the shell of the *first Methodist chapel of Maine* already reared. The class consisted of seventeen members. "Surely," he exclaims, "the Lord is about to do great things for the people. Even so; amen, and amen." He says:

> "I tarried in town all day, and went to look at our meeting-house. It is almost covered in. Through my influence, the people began this house last summer, and it is now nearly ready to preach in. It is the first Methodist meeting-house ever built in the Province of Maine. I expect we shall see Methodism greatly spreading in these parts before long. Here Antinomianism has much prevailed for a few years, amongst the Baptists. Their minister, Isaac Case, a good old man, often says of his followers, that they are *case* hardened. They are greatly afraid the Methodists will do much harm."

Early on Wednesday, 26th, he was again pressing forward, on his way to Sandy River, on a lonely road, and through intense cold. In a part of his route he passed over seven or eight miles without seeing a single habitation. He remarks:

> "It appeared as if my feet would freeze; but I drew one of my mittens over the toe of my shoe, and made out to keep it from freezing. When I got to Farmington, I found no appointment had been made for me to preach. Here I took dinner, and spent a little time with the people; then rode up to Reed's, in Middletown. It was dark, and I felt so chilled that I shook as though I had an ague. My cheeks, and the under part of my chin, were so pinched by the cold, that they felt

quite sore for a week; and what made the matter still worse, was the exceeding roughness of the road, which made the journey unpleasant; however, I met with a kind reception at night, and was greatly delighted at hearing of the work of God upon the river, and of souls being brought to know God, since I was here before."

Such trials only inspirited this apostolic Itinerant. With a heart exulting in God, and flaming with zeal, he proclaimed the word of life the next morning to the assembled neighbors. "It was a delightful season; my heart was humbled within me before God, and the people were melted into tears. I could not repent coming to this place, though I came through great tribulation." The same day he was again away, for Farmington, where he preached in the afternoon. "On my way," he says, "I overtook a company of women who had been at meeting; one among them was praising God for his goodness, and those in company were weeping. When I came up, the one who was praising God took me by the hand, and told me how good the Lord had been to her. My soul was transported with the pleasing sound; but how unfashionable it is to hear people praise God along the road! I came to Mr. Bradford's, in Farmington, and at 3 o'clock, I preached on John 4: 14. Here the Lord was pleased to visit us again with his blessed presence. Tears flowed from many eyes, and it seemed to be a time of love. Several persons in this neighborhood have been lately brought to the knowledge of God. The righteous are becoming as bold as lions."

December, with its hyperborean storms, had come upon the bold evangelist, in what was then the heart of the wilderness Province, but he still pressed forward. He remarks:

"Monday, 1st, it snowed all day. A man went with me on a new tour, where the Methodists had never been before, excepting one place. We rode through the snow to the Vineyard, and stopped at Deacon Norton's; but his wife being sick, we could not stay there, as they had a large family, and but one room that was fit to lodge in. However,

> we obtained something to eat, and prayed with them, and a little after dark, went to Daniel Luce's, and stayed all night; the next day preached at Luce's. The people heard the word with attention, and with tears in their eyes. It is very seldom they have an opportunity of hearing a sermon. After meeting we travelled a very bad road to Capt Dagget's, in the east part of the town. I was kindly entertained, and slept comfortably."

By Wednesday, 3d, he reached, through the woods, the junction of Sandy River and the Kennebec. On a part of the way there were no traces of a path; his guide had to follow the "chops" on the trees; the snow was nearly a foot deep, and the travelling most difficult. About noon the weary sojourners descried a house in the forest, the first one on their route. Even here the ambassador of Christ could not omit his message. He entered the habitation, and warned its occupants to flee from the wrath to come. The woman of the house had not heard a sermon within two years, and her husband had heard but one or two in that time, by travelling a great distance. They listened with solemnity to his exhortations. He reached a hospitable house by night, weary and cold, but had the neighbors assembled, and preached to them the same evening. "I found comfort," he says, "in delivering to this people a message from the Lord; and they received it with great attention, and appeared very thankful for this opportunity. They never heard a Methodist before."

The next day he "rode up the Kennebec, to Mr. James Burn's, at Zitcombtown, a little below Seven Miles Brook," where he proclaimed at night, that "God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him," — I. John 4 : 9.

> "They were all attention," he says, "and some of them much wrought upon, so that they could not forbear weeping. I felt a hope that the word was profitable to the souls of the people. They importuned me to come amongst them again, or try and send one to preach to them, for they seldom hear a sermon of any kind. My heart was moved with com-

passion for the people. There never was a Methodist preacher in these parts before. Lord send forth more laborers into thy vineyard, and into this part of the world."

There were sparse settlements scattered about thirty miles higher up the river, but his time was limited; the next day he turned his face towards the South, preached on his way, and recrossed Sandy River on the ice.

"Monday, 8th. I rode to Mr. J. Cochran's, in Goshen, and at 2 o'clock, I preached on Ephes. 2 : 20. I found a good deal of freedom in preaching; some of them were much wrought upon, and could not refrain from tears. I baptized three children, and the parents appeared to be very solemn while I was speaking. There is great attention paid to religion in this place at present. I hope several persons are determined to seek and serve the Lord."

By the 12th he was again in Readfield. It was a *fast day* in the infant society, in preparation for what was to be a great occasion among them on the approaching Sabbath — *the first consecration of the Lord's Supper by the Methodists of Maine.* He preached to them from the words, "*We then as co-workers together with God,*" *&c.*

"I found much of the presence of God with us while we were together. There was a considerable move amongst the people. I then met the class, and consulted about administering the Lord's Supper. One of our friends gave us an agreeable account of a gracious work of God amongst the people at Sandy River. Lord increase it abundantly. Tarried all night at the widow Johnson's. Several persons were present who wished to know what they should do to be saved.

"Sunday, 14th. I preached in Readfield and administered the Lord's Supper to about eight persons. This was the first time that this ordinance had ever been administered in this town by the Methodists, or in any part of this Province. We had a happy time together.

"Tuesday, 16th. Setting out with Samuel Dudley, we rode to the Hook and crossed Kennebec River,though it appeared to be very dangerous, for the ice would often bend under the horses; when on the other side it broke in ten or fifteen feet from the shore, but they came out safe, and we went to another place, and walked to the shore. I then went on to John Plummer's, in New Milford, and was kindly entertained. The day following I preached at Plummer's, in New-Milford;

> some wept freely. After meeting I had some pressing invitations to come again.

On Tuesday, the 23d, he preached at Littleborough, to a crowded congregation, which melted under the presence of God. "Many of the people," he remarks, "could hardly refrain from weeping aloud." Remarkable news occurred here. After he had dismissed the assembly and retired into another room,

> "A man," he says, "came in to speak to me, and burst into tears. Another came in with tears in his eyes, and begged that I would preach again at night. I could not refuse. Some of the people then went home, but soon returned. One man being in deep distress, began to cry aloud to God to have mercy upon his poor soul; and thus he continued to cry with all his might, until some of the people were much frightened. I talked, prayed, and sung, and while I was singing a visible alteration took place in his countenance, and I was inclined to think his soul was set at liberty. He afterwards spoke as though he believed it was so."

But scarcely had this penitent found comfort, when another "was seized with trembling, and began to pray the Lord to have mercy upon his poor soul, and cried aloud for some time." These strange scenes excited much interest among the spectators. Lee immediately opened his Bible and began to address them with his touching pathos, from I. Peter 5; 7; "*Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you;*" but soon another man was seized with a violent trembling, and cried aloud. There was weeping through the whole assembly. The preacher's voice was drowned; he was compelled to stop. He knelt down and prayed for the awakened man, and when quiet was restored he resumed his discourse, amidst the sobbings of the congregation. "It appeared," he remarks, "as if the whole neighborhood was about to turn to God. I hope the fruit of this meeting will be seen after many days, and that the work of the Lord will revive from this time."

Thursday, 25th, he preached a Christmas sermon, at Monmouth, on Isaiah 4 : 6.

> "We had," he says, "a remarkably large congregation, and a very remarkable season. The people seemed to swallow every word. Toward the end of the meeting, the power of God was mightily displayed; there were but few dry eyes in the house. I wept over my congregation, and had to stop for a season. I begged the poor sinners to be reconciled to God, till I was persuaded that some of them would obey the truth. P. Wager exhorted, with a good deal of life. We then administered the Lord's Supper to several persons. This is the first time the Methodists ever communed in this town. Then I gave the friends some advice about building a meeting-house in this place."

On Tuesday, the 30th, he set out on his journey westward; by the 1st Jan. 1795, he reached Portsmouth, N. H., where he preached to four neighbors of his host. Thence he passed to Lynn. He had spent about two months in Maine, during which, undaunted by the driving storms of the north, he had penetrated on horseback to the frontier settlements, preaching the word, and encouraging those incipient societies of Methodism, which could then claim but one sanctuary in the Province, and that scarcely more substantial than a barn, but have since multiplied themselves throughout the State, and dotted its surface with temples.

After laboring two or three weeks in Lynn and its vicinity, he sallied forth again, though amidst the blasts of midwinter, on an excursion to Rhode Island, and the south-eastern parts of Massachusetts. We give the following notes of this tour.

> "Sunday, 25th. Bristol court-house, at half after 10 o'clock, I preached on Isa. 53 : 1. I had but a small congregation, but I found some freedom in speaking. At 2 o'clock I preached again to a crowded house, and had a solemn meeting. I spoke with faith and delight; and the people were all attention. I felt a pleasing hope that good was done in the name of the Lord Jesus. I then crossed the ferry to Portsmouth. At night, at Mr. Earl's, I preached on Matt. 11 : 30. I had a crowded house; and I was much assisted in speaking. The people were attentive, and some of them deeply affected. I was ready

to conclude that the Lord was about to revive his work in this place. The people are teachable, and glad to hear of the way to heaven.

"Wednesday, 28th. I rode to the north end of the Island and crossed the ferry to Tiverton, and preached at Mr. Benjamin Howling's. I had a large congregation. It was a place where the Methodists never preached before. I found my soul at liberty, and spoke to the people with a great deal of freedom; some of my hearers were cut to the heart, and wept much.

"Friday, 30th. I rode to New-Bedford, and put up at Mr. George East's. I gave them a sermon at night, on Rom, 13: 10. The people were quite solemn. It may be remarked that this was the first Methodist sermon ever preached in this town.

"Tuesday, 3d of February. I sailed in the packet for Nantucket Island, but having a rough, disagreeable passage, and being very sick withal, I prevailed with them to land me on the Vineyard. I shook as though I had an ague, being cold and sick. I then walked to Mr. J. Dagget's tavern, at the head of the harbor at Holme's-Hole. I was kindly received, and gladly entertained. The next day I gave them a sermon in the meeting-house; we had a small congregation, and not much life. At night I preached again with more freedom and faith than in the morning, and the word seemed to make some impression on the minds of the hearers; perhaps I am the first Methodist preacher who has visited this place for the express purpose of preaching, and even now, I have visited the place sooner than I intended, for I expected to have called here on my way from Nantucket.

"Friday, 6th. I preached at Shubal Davies' in Edgarton. I had a refreshing season, and spoke with faith.

"The next day I borrowed a horse, and went to see old Mr. Zacheus Mayhew, who is a missionary to the Indians on the Island. I met him on the road. He went back with me to Mr. Morse's, the minister of Tisbury, who lives in a place called Newtown. We tarried till after dinner; and then rode to the widow Norton's. Mr. Mayhew went with me. We concluded to go down and spend the Sabbath with his congregation of Indians. The old missionary is about seventy-seven years of age, and seems to be acquainted with the love of God. I asked him particularly about his conversion, and was pleased with the relation he gave.

"Thursday, 12th. A small schooner being ready to sail, I embarked, with three sailors as passengers, beside the two men who belonged to the vessel. At 9 o'clock we sailed for New Bedford; but having to beat out of the harbor, and the wind dying away, we were not able to get through Wood's-Hole; so we put into the wharf just by Wood's-Hole, and went up to Mr. Parker's tavern, in the town of Falmouth, and county of Barnstable. I concluded it was all for the best, and feeling quite resigned to my lot, I determined to try and do something for God. I spoke to the tavern keeper about a meeting; he was quite willing to have a meeting at his house, so that people were requested to meet at night. My text was Rom. 10: 4. I found liberty in speaking. Here I am detained, but I hope it may be for the good of some poor soul. I was kindly entertained *gratis*. The Lord reward the family according to their good works.

"Friday, 13th, was quite stormy in the morning, and some of the company seemed unwilling to go. I thought it best to try it; so we set sail about 9 o'clock, with the wind ahead, blowing very hard, and the snow falling very fast. We beat through Wood's-Hole, a very dangerous place for vessels to pass through; and after tacking backwards and forwards for about two hours, I was *dreadfully* sick; however, after much difficulty, we landed at New-Bedford a little after dark. I felt thankful for a safe arrival at the long wished for place. I lodged with Mr. East.

"Monday, 16th. I preached at Stoke's, at 1 o'clock, on I. Pet. 3 : 9. Though we had a small company, it was a melting season. Brother N. Chapin closed the meeting by prayer. We then consulted about building a meeting-house, and determined to begin to build it in the lower part of Easton, near Bridgewater, as soon as possible. The people seemed to be in good spirits about it, though they are but poor. At night, I preached at old Mr. Churchill's, in Bridgewater. I believe our meeting was not in vain. Brother N. Chapin told me this evening that by hearing me preach, the first Methodist he ever heard, he was reclaimed from a backslidden state; and so brought to preach the gospel. While he was relating this to me, I felt both humble and happy; and was brought to say, O, that it was with me as in days past, when the Lord owned my labors in the conversion of many. But if there were not another soul brought to know God, by my ministry, I should still have cause to bless him that ever I preached the gospel."

His biographer omits his notes of the remainder of this tour. They were very copious, but are unfortunately lost forever.* We learn, however, from his Memoir, that he continued sometime his travels in Rhode Island and the adjacent parts of Massachusetts.

"From Greenwich, he went through the deep snow to Hardwick, from thence to Braintree; the travelling was so *intolerable*, that he concluded to stop a day or two, and preach to small and careless congregations. With much difficulty, he reached Worcester, the snow being deep and the way untrodden; he thence passed to Milford, Mansfield, and to Norton. At the latter place, he met the preachers of the Circuit, and held a quarterly meeting. Easton was the next stand, where good prospects of a revival of religion cheered him exceedingly; then he hasted to Boston, where religious affairs remained unimproved; but the quarterly meeting at that place, was held in peace.

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* Lee's unpublished MSS. were consumed by the burning of the Methodist Book Rooms, 1836.

He then proceeded to Lynn, as the next place in course. He found an evident declension of religious fervor in Lynn."

It was now the most inclement period of the year in New England, and especially unfavorable for travelling; yet he longed again to plunge into the wintry wilderness of Maine, and to bear the Cross onward to distances far beyond his former tours. After attending the Quarterly Meeting, at Marblehead, and putting affairs in order at Lynn, he mounted his horse, the faithful companion of his toils, and commenced his journey.

He passed through Salisbury, Portsmouth, crossed Piscataway into the Province of Maine, and then advanced on through Kennebec to Major Ilsley's, at Back Cove, in Falmouth; from thence to Portland, Monmouth, Readfield, the Twenty-five mile Pond; this, with most of the forementioned places, he had visited about eighteen months previously; during which time there had been a gracious revival of religion; but some *religious quarrels* had damped the rising flame. Leaving the Twenty-five mile Pond, he had very bad roads to Hampden; twice in one day his horse fell into the deep mud, and he but narrowly escaped with whole bones. From thence he came to Bangor, where he found it necessary to cross the Penobscot; there was no ferry-boat at hand, but two small boats were procured, and made fast together, and his horse was made to stand with his fore feet in one, and his hind feet in the other boat, and all were enabled to get over without accident. He went on, taking Orrington, Buckstown, Goldsborough, Epping, the Falls of Pleasant River, and Machias, in his way. Swimming rivers, passing dangerous fords, encountering hills, rocks, and mire, were the occurrences of every day's travel. Coming to Colonel Stillman's, within two miles of Machias, he formed a resolution of crossing the Passamaquoddy, and of visiting the British Provinces. He accordingly visited Moose, and Dudley Islands; and then passed into St. Andrew's, in the Province of New-Brunswick. In all these places, he found the people destitute of preaching. He then proceeded to St. John, and in crossing a part of the Bay of Fundy, the vessel was driven against the rocks by the rapid tide, which created some alarm on board; but fortunately, they came off without injury. The next day, the captain put into a place called Dipper Harbor, within eight leagues of St. John. Here he continued two days, and preached at a Mr. French's, who, although the proprietor of three thousand acres of land, could not afford a chair for his guests to sit upon. Having a favorable wind, they set sail, and soon landed at the town of St. John.

"In this town he spent seven or eight days very agreeably, preaching, meeting classes, holding prayer meetings, and visiting the sick and others who needed his company and advice.

"Saturday, the 16th of May, he took his leave of St. John, and sailed for St. Andrew's, at which place he arrived the same day, quite sick from his voyage, but was able to preach at night. The next day, he embarked for St. Stephen's, in Schoodic River, but being becalmed, they were forced to come to anchor, a little below a large hill on the American shore, called Devil's Head; here he went on shore, visited a family, and conversed on the subject of religion. In the afternoon they weighed anchor again, passed Devil's Head, and proceeded up the river a little, and were again becalmed. There was no other alternative but that of casting anchor; he, however, hailed a row boat that was passing, was taken on board, and carried up the river to Duncan M'Call's. It was now past 11 o'clock at night, but the family arose at his call, and received him with open hearts. He found a hearty friend in Duncan M'Call, one with whom he had corresponded for several years. He had long felt a desire of seeing him, and now his desire was realized, and their kindred spirits were more closely united. For several days he tarried with his friend M'Call; and as he was now at the dividing line between the United States and the British Provinces, he had an opportunity of giving his labors to each for several days.

"On the 15th of July, Conference for the New England States was to be held in New-London; his friend Mr. M'Call had come to a determination to accompany him thither; so, embarking in a canoe on the 25th of May, they went down the river, and over to the American shores, to Mr. Brewster's, and after spending a little time with the family in prayer, they hastened on to Mr. Voris', in Bobin's-town, where he preached to a thin congregation. They then went to Moose Island, where Mr. Lee preached. Leaving Moose Island, they proceeded up Crobscook River in the canoe, and passed through the falls, though not without danger of being swallowed in the whirling eddies of this dangerous pass. They, however, arrived safe at Colonel Crew's, at the head of the river. Here they left the canoe, and hired a guide, to take them through the woods to the stage road. Lakes, ponds, and dreary swamps, opposed their march; they sometimes waded, then floundered through the mud, then crossed the intervening waters in frail bark canoes. At length they took shelter for the night, with Colonel Stillman, after a journey of fifteen miles by water, and eighteen by land. Here he met with his horse, and pursued his numerous appointments until the setting of Conference."

We have no further particulars of these labors, except that on Tuesday, the 21st of June, he dedicated, in Readfield, the *first Methodist chapel erected in Maine.*

Such is a glance at the labors of this wonderful man, during the ten months which had elapsed since his departure from the Wilbraham Conference. Similar journies and exertions, performed with our present conveniences for travel, would be considered extraordinary—how much more so were they at that day! How soon would the earth be evangelized were the whole Christian ministry of like spirit!

Lee has recorded, for the satisfaction of later Methodists, the dates of the first sermons by Methodist preachers in several parts of Maine. The first in the Province was at Saco, 10th Sept., 1793; in Portland, 12th; Hallowell, 13th Oct.; Farmington, 15th; Readfield, 16th; Winthrop, 21st; Monmouth, 22d; Livermore, 12th Jan. 1794; Chesterville, 21st; Vassalborough, 5th March; Winslow, 9th; Norridgwock, 11th Fairfield, 13th.

While Lee was approaching the seat of the Conference from the North, Asbury was wending his course towards it from the South, where he had performed unparalleled journies and labors. He left New York city on the 6th of July, and entering Connecticut, preached at Stamford in a private house. The next day he rode thirty-three miles to Stratford, where, though weak and depressed, he preached to a multitude which crowded the house inside and out. On Friday, 10th, he reached New Haven. His former visit had left a favorable impression; "Nothing would do," he remarks, "but I must preach in Dr. Edwards meeting-house, which I did from these words, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord." The next day he was at Middletown, and spent a portion of the day in visiting from house to house, and in conducting a prayer-meeting. Notwithstanding his constant public labors, it was his habit frequently to visit the individual families of the societies, and these visits were strictly pastoral; no labor seemed too great nor too small for his tireless spirit. The following day was the Sabbath; he preached three sermons, two at the "The Farms," and one at the

Court House. On Monday the 13th, he preached with "some life," at Middle-Haddam, and reached New London the next day. The preachers had been arriving, way-worn and dusty, during the day; but in the evening they gathered around their great champion, who, ever ready, preached to them and to the multitude.

The year had been a calamitous one for the church generally — the Minutes reported an aggregate decrease of 6317. "Such a loss," says Lee, "we had never known since we were a people."* But while the desolating measures of O'Kelly were blighting the former rich growth of the South, the New England field was extending on every hand, and yielding an abundant increase. Its returns of members amounted to 2575, an advance on the preceding year of 536, or more than one fourth.

There was apparently a gain of but one Circuit, or Station, eighteen being reported the preceding year, and nineteen the present. One, however, of the former (Vermont) was purely nominal; Joshua Hall, who was appointed to it, being detained in Massachusetts.† The real gain was at least five; it was larger than in any former year. The remodelling of several western Circuits diminished their number, but their real extent and importance were proportionably augmented by the change. *Pomfret*, in Conn., *Provincetown* and *Marblehead*, in Mass., *Portland* and *Penobscot*, in Maine, were the new names reported among the appointments for the ensuing year.

The gains in the membership were chiefly in Maine. A solitary preacher (Philip Wager) had been appointed at the preceding Conference, to that vast field, but no society had then been organized. During the present year, Lee, as we have seen, traversed the Province, braving the storms of winter, and proclaiming the word of life to its farthest boundary. Scores, and even hundreds, were awakened and converted under his faithful labors, and those of his coadjutor. Several societies were organized; the first Methodist chapel in the Province was erected; the first returns of members were made. Readfield Circuit reported 232 members; Portland, 136; and Passamaquoddy, (on the eastern boundary,) 50; an aggregate of 318 — the germ of a wide-spread subsequent growth. Methodism had unfurled its banners in Maine, never more to strike them till the heavens flee away.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Anno 1795.

† Dr. Bangs' statement respecting Mr. Hall's labors in Vermont (Hist. of M. E. Church, Anno 1794) is inaccurate, as will be seen in the sketch of Mr. Hall.

# CHAPTER XX.

## NOTICES OF THE CONFERENCE AND PREACHERS OF 1795.

Conference at New London — Incidents of the Session — Appointments — Extent of Methodism in New England — Notices of Preachers — Cyrus Stebbins — John Vanneman — John Harper — Elias Hull — Jesse Stoneman — Joseph Mitchel — Nathaniel Chapin — Daniel Dennis — Timothy Dewy — Locations — Poverty of the Church.

THE Conference at New London commenced its session on Wednesday, the 15th of July, 1795. Nineteen preachers were present.* A small number of Methodists had been formed into a society in New London about two years, but they were yet without a chapel in which to accommodate the Conference. It held its sessions in the house of Daniel Burrows. Though assembled, without ostentation, and without a temple, noble men composed that unnoticed body, and sublime visions of the future rose before their contemplations. Asbury looked forth from the private room in which they met, with the comprehensive hope that their deliberations would be "for the good of thousands." Some of them were yet to see their little company grow into a host of more than seven hundred strong, and lead on, from conquering to conquer, an evangelical army of 75,000 souls. Asbury, Lee, Roberts, Priest, Pickering, Mudge, Taylor, Snethen, Smith, Ostrander and McCoombs, were among the rare men who composed that unpretending assembly.

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* MS. Sermon of Rev. R. W. Allen. Asbury says "about 20"— Journals, Anno 1795.

The session continued until Saturday. McCall, from the British Provinces, and Kingston and Harper, Wesleyan Missionaries from the West Indies, were present. Some polemical discussions occurred; "especially," says Asbury, "in reference to "the ancient contest about Baptism,—these people being originally connected with those who are of that line." "O, what wisdom, meekness, patience and prudence, are necessary," adds the sagacious Bishop. "Great peace," however, prevailed throughout the deliberations. The brethren from the West Indies had arrived with prostrate health, and exhausted purses. Asbury expresses his pleasure at seeing "Our preachers ready to give their strange brethren a little of the little they had;" a practice almost universal among Methodist preachers in those days of suffering and self-sacrifice. They sat together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, reviewing the successes and trials of the past year, planning new and more extended projects of labor for the future, uniting in frequent prayer that the word might run and be glorified, and preaching it daily to each other and the gathered multitude in the court-house. Evan Rogers, who had been educated a Quaker, and combined much of the gravity of his first with the warm energy of his new faith, addressed the preachers particularly, and, it is said, very pertinently, on defects in their pulpit delivery, which were not uncommon at that date. His text, at least, was significant; it was I. Cor. 14: 19: "*Yet in the church I had rather speak five words* *with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*"[*]

Chalmers brought them glad tidings from Rhode Island, and reported the erection of the first Methodist chapel of that State.[†] Ostrander brought good news from the Connecticut River, the work of God was advancing slowly, but surely, along its banks, prejudice was yielding, the hostility of the established churches had been defeated in several instances, and though the cry was that they were "turning the world upside down," yet numerous places in all directions were sending to them the Macedonian cry to come over and help them, and hundreds were waking from their spiritual slumbers to call upon God and lead a devoted life. Zadok Priest, hastening to the grave, and holding his last interview with them, had cheering tidings from the large region of the New London Circuit. Hill was there from Hew Hampshire, to report that innumerable doors were opening in that wilderness region for the access of the new evangelists — but the laborers were few, and none could yet be spared. Lee, wayworn with his vast travels, cheered them with surprising encouragements from Maine — the formation of two new Circuits, the organization of the first Methodist Society, and the erection of the first Methodist chapel in the Province, together with the report of more than three hundred members received there since the last session of the Conference. Encouraged by their mutual communications, and refreshed from the presence of the Lord, they sung a hymn, and bowed together in a concluding prayer, at noon, on Saturday; they tarried, however, through the Sabbath, the great day of the feast. Early on Monday morning, before the community were fairly astir, Asbury was away on his war-horse, and by

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[*] Letter of Rev. E. Mudge to the Writer.

[†] It was usual, at that period, for the preachers to "give a free and full account of themselves and their Circuits, at the Conference." Asbury's Journals, Sept. 22, 1795.

8 o'clock, A. M., was sounding the alarm in Norwich, while the preachers were urging their steeds in all directions to the conflicts of another year.

The appointments for New England the present ecclesiastical year, were as follows: Jesse Lee, *Elder; Greenwich*, John Hill, Daniel Brumley; *Warren*, Zadok Priest, Cyrus Stebbins; *Needham*, John Vanneman; *Boston*, John Harper, to change in six months; *Lynn*, George Pickering, to change in six months; *Marblehead*, James Covel; *Provincetown*, George Cannon; *Readfield*, Enoch Mudge, Elias Hull; *Penobscot*, Joshua Hall; *Portland*, Philip Wager; *Orange*, Thomas Coope; *Tolland*, Christopher Spry, Nicholas Snethen; *Granville*, Lemuel Smith, Zebulon Kankey; *Litchfield*, Jesse Stoneman, Joseph Mitchel; *Middletown*, Evan Rogers, Joel Ketchum; *Pomfret*, Daniel Ostrander, Nathaniel Chapin; *New London*, Amos G. Thompson, Lawrence McCoombs; *Redding*, Daniel Dennis, Timothy Dewy; *Pittsfield*, Robert Green. The last two Circuits were under the Presiding Eldership of George Roberts, whose District included Long Island, the city of New York, and several Circuits west of the Connecticut boundary. Pittsfield, we believe, was the only New England Circuit which reached into New York, while several of the New York Circuits extended across the New England boundary. The programme of labor for the year — from July, 1795, to September, 1796 — included *one* District and *part* of a second, *nineteen* Circuits and *thirty* preachers. Add to these about 2600 members, with some half dozen chapels, and we have a general outline of Methodism in New England at this date.

Hitherto we have given notices, however slight, of all the Itinerant preachers who labored in the eastern States during the first six years of our history. They now become too numerous for such detail. Nearly one third of those in the above list were new laborers in New England. We record what information we have been able to glean respecting a few of them:

Cyrus Stebbins commenced his Itinerant labors on the Warren Circuit, R. I., the present year. The next year he was transferred to the distant region of the Kennebec, Me., where he travelled the Readfield Circuit, in connection with John Broadhead, of beloved memory. Removals, in those days, were almost invariably annual, and with little regard to distance; after spending a year in Maine, Mr. Stebbins was dispatched to western Massachusetts, where he labored on the Pittsfield Circuit. The following year he was stationed in New York city with Geo. Roberts and Joshua Wells. In 1799 he travelled the Brooklyn and Long Island Circuit, and in 1800 was stationed in Albany. He continued in the ministry four years more, and labored respectively on Cambridge, Albany, (two years,) and Brooklyn Circuits, and in 1805 withdrew from the church, for reasons which we have not been able to ascertain. He was a pungent and powerful preacher; some of his discourses are still often recalled, in conversation, by our elder members in New England; one of them, particularly, preached under the trees at the homestead of Pickering, on the text, "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." The whole assembly stood appalled at his declaration of the divine wrath against all ungodliness, trembling spread throughout their midst, and many went home to call upon God, and prepare for his coming retribution. Had he remained in the Itinerancy, his peculiar talents would have secured him an extended influence and usefulness, but on leaving it he entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, where he lingered through many years of comparative uselessness, and died in obscurity.

Elias Hull, was received into the Itinerant ministry the present year and appointed to Readfield Circuit, Me.; the following year he travelled the Penobscot Circuit, in that State. In 1797 he was removed to Massachusetts and appointed to Boston and Needham, with Daniel Ostrander. He withdrew from the church in 1798, and subsequently became a Congregationalist clergyman, as did also his brother, Stephen Hull. Like most, however, of those who deserted the labors of Methodism, in its early days of privation, for the easier positions and distinctions of other ministries, both of them were frustrated in their hopes, and one was expelled from his new communion, on charges of grave delinquency.

Joseph Mitchel's first appointment was on Cambridge Circuit, N. Y., as colleague of Robert Green, in 1794. The next three years he travelled successively Litchfield, (Conn.,) Granville, (Mass.,) with Ralph Williston, and Duchess (N. Y.) Circuits. In 1798 he was appointed to Vergennes Circuit, Vermont — an immense sphere of travel and toil, more than 500 miles in compass. He was the first preacher regularly designated to it, and continued there two years, suffering the trials incident to a new field of labor, but effectually breaking up the ground for his successors. While on this Circuit, he received into the church a youth who has since risen to the highest function of our ministry — the present senior Bishop of the M. E. Church. In 1800 he was removed to the Pittsfield and Whitingham Circuit, where he had the assistance of Michael Coate; the following year he was returned to Pittsfield, but in 1803 we fail to find his appointment. He was a man of extraordinary powers, though of deficient education — a natural logician, a shrewd wit, and a most energetic and overpowering preacher. His success was remarkable, and many are the stars which shine in his crown. After his location he removed to Illinois, where he died in peace. The eccentric Lorenzo Dow relates an instance of his power in the pulpit, which occurred at a quarterly meeting, where he produced such an impression that none of the usual ecclesiastical business of those occasions could be transacted, but the entire time was spent in public and spiritual exercises. When he began to exhort, a trembling commenced among the unconverted; one, and a second, and a third fell from their seats, and the cry for mercy became general; many backsliden professors were cut to the quick, and for eleven hours there was no cessation of the loud cries and supplications of the smitten assembly.*

Of the nine who were added to the New England Itinerant phalanx in 1795, two withdrew, and all the remainder located without again resuming effective service, so far as we can ascertain. Sad necessity of the times, which compelled so many at the maturest period of their energies, to seek bread for their families in secular pursuits! It was a necessity, nor was the church culpable for it. Recently organized, existing yet in feeble and scattered bands, composed mostly of God's poor, without chapels, and without resources, and almost without friends or sympathy, it was impossible for it to maintain a married ministry. Hence most of the Itinerants of that day retired in early manhood. But the Lord provided for the exigency. Young men, vigorous in faith and talent, were perpetually rising up to fill the vacated ranks, while, through the admirable economy of the church, the retiring champions continued, undiminished, their Sabbath labors, and became, as it were, the veteran garrisons of local positions throughout the land. Hundreds, too, of the latter, after providing for their families, re-entered the active service with unabated heroism, and, "waxing valiant in fight," turned to flight the armies of the aliens throughout the rest of their years, and fell, at last, with their armor on. The ministry of no church, since the apostolic age, has presented severer tests of character, and no tests have brought out nobler developements of energy and devotion. Let us again turn our attention to the two noblest among the noble of those days of suffering and triumph.

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* Dow's Journal.

# CHAPTER XXI.

## ASBURY AND LEE ITINERATING.

Asbury at General Lippett's — Providence — Boston — Lynn — Waltham — Framingham — Leaves New England — Lee at Boston — The first Methodist Chapel in the Metropolis — Persecution at Provincetown — Lee in Maine — Incidents at Mount Desert — Asbury returns to the East — At Redding — New Haven — Middletown — Quarterly Meeting — New London — Haddam — Norwich — Results of the Year.

Asbury left New London, as we have seen, early on Monday morning after the Conference, and at eight o'clock, A. M., was preaching in the Academy at Norwich. Though the season was oppressively warm, "an awful time of heat," as he describes it, he had projected a circuitous tour of many hundred miles though New England, and back again to New York, to be accomplished on horseback in little more than a month. The next day he was on his route to Rhode Island, and reached Coventry, where, he remarks, "my fatigue and indisposition made me glad to get to bed." The day after, he reached General Lippett's, his favorite resting-place, or rather stopping-place in Rhode Island. He writes:

> "I consider it fifty hard miles from New London to General Lippett's; we have been the best of three days riding it, through the in-

> tense heat; last year I rode it in one day. I feel a moving towards these people, as though the Lord would get himself a name, and have a people to praise him in this place. I feel myself greatly humbled before the Lord, for the peace and union in our late Conference; and the satisfaction expressed by the preachers on receiving their stations."

On the following day, he arrived at Providence, but met with no very flattering reception. As he entered the town with Lee and Roberts by his side,

> "Some noisy, drunken fellows," he writes "raised a cry and shout, and made a sacrifice of the Methodists to hell. Mr. —— is now pastor, and the Tennant-house is shut against us. I wished to ride on, and not stop in town; but Mr. Robertson, an ancient Englishman, constrained us to turn in with him. We dined at Milton, and made it thirty miles to Boston."

The prospect was not very flattering yet in the metropolis. He writes:

> "I preached twice on the Sabbath, (though very unwell) in a room that will hold about two hundred and fifty people. It seemed as if we hardly had either cursing or blessing among the people here. I have no doubt but that if we had a house, we should command a large congregation; but we labor under great inconveniences where we preach at present. I feel myself feeble in body and faint in spirit; yet Christ is mine, and I hope to be his in time and forever. Amen."

On Monday, 27th, he reached Lynn. He was feeble and worn with labor, yet sought no repose; besides his pulpit exercises, he here, as elsewhere, performed the duties of a pastor. He says:

> "Since I have been in Lynn, I have visited Woodsend and Gravesend, met five classes, visited about one dozen families, talked to them personally about their souls, and prayed with them. I have filled up intervals in reading my Bible, and the second volume of Mr. Wesley's sermon."

On Monday, August 2d, a warm and sultry day, he says:

> "I arose in the morning very feeble in spirit, and attended prayer-meeting at six o'clock. I preached three times; administered the sacrament, and met two classes, and was not so fatigued as I expected I

> should have been. I have had some refreshing seasons; and now I bid farewell to Lynn for two years."

Such extraordinary exertions could not fail, however, to react on the nervous system; even this man of giant energy wept and sorrowed at times, like a child. During his visit to Lynn, he says, "My spirits were sunk in dejection, I felt no passion, but grief and sorrow." Yet no delay, no rest! "to *move*, *move*," he adds, "seems to be my life," and he laments that he did "not set off with the young men to the Province of Maine."

On Monday, after the excessive labors just noticed, he departed for the delightful homestead of Pickering, at Waltham; but its quiet seclusion and shady orchards, then bending with the golden peach and apple, could not charm him from his one work; he preached, and was away again the next day. His zeal infected all about him. Of Roberts, who accompanied him, he says he had taken "an intermittent fever when we were at New Haven, and hath labored and suffered, sick or well, until he is almost dead."

He left him to the hospitable care of the family, and pressed forward, on Tuesday, to Framingham, where he says:

> "I preached to a simple-hearted people; and although weak in body, I felt enlargement of heart; here the society appeared to be all tenderness, sweetness and love. After riding thirty miles to Milford, (being an excessive day of heat and hunger,) I preached on Isaiah 35: 3: 6. To my great surprise, whilst I was preaching, Brother Roberts, whom I had left sick at Waltham, came in; I was amazed that he should ride thirty miles through such heat, without eating or drinking; it was enough to make a well man sick.
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> "Thursday, 6th. We set out for Thompson, in Connecticut, whence we came to dear Brother Nichols's; if I had not eaten, I could not have stood the labor of thirty miles, and preaching. I found there was religion among this society; the ancient people are stirred up by the Baptists, and the young ones by the Methodists.
>
> "Saturday, 8th. We rode twenty-six miles to Wilbraham; I was well nigh spent, and Brother Roberts was ready to drop on the roadside. I spoke late; the weather was warm; I took but little rest for my body, and my mind was powerfully tried various ways.

"Sunday morning, 9th. My first subject was the parable of the sower, afterwards the sacrament was administered. I thought it a dull time, but others did not think so. I gave them another discourse in the afternoon, on 'The promise is to you and to your children.' It was a running exhortation, chiefly application. In the evening, Brother Roberts, though weak in body, gave them a sermon on 'My little children for whom I travel in birth again till Christ be formed in you.' I see but little prospect of good being done here whilst the people are so divided.

"Monday, 10th. I stopped and gave an exhortation, at Springfield. After a thunder-gust, we came to Agawomin. If I accomplish the tour I have in contemplation, it will make about six or seven hundred miles to the city of New York. I was stopped by the rain; but when I cannot do one thing another offers; I could read, write, pray, and plan. I laid out a plan for my travels in 1797; through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Province of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York; making a distance of twelve or fifteen hundred miles. I set out for Williamstown, on the banks of the Hoosack, on the west borders of the Massachusetts; I lodged at Sister H.'s; I was well steeped in water, although my cloak saved me, in a good degree, as is frequently the case. My rest was interrupted. To labor hard all the day, and have no sleep at night, ill suited the flesh. Well might St. Paul say, 'If in this life only we have hope in Chirst, we are of all men most miserable.' To labor and to suffer by night and by day, meet reproach, give up father and mother, wife, children, country, liberty, ease, health, wealth, sometimes life itself, in martyrdom: all this may be required."

On Saturday, 22d, he parted from Roberts to visit a small society at Ashgrove, N. Y., formed by Philip Embury, the founder of American Methodism. Riding fifty miles on Saturday, he spent the Sabbath with them preaching twice, but was on his route again the same day, and after travelling some time in Connecticut, re-entered the State of New York, riding "nearly twenty miles through considerable heat, without refreshments." He had travelled, he computes, about four hundred miles in about the three weeks which had intervened since he left Lynn. Thus, he passes from our view, to perform similar labors in all the rest of the land, and through all the rest of his life.

Lee accompanied Asbury from Lynn, through Waltham and Framingham, to Milford, where he took his leave of the

Bishop and Roberts, in order to return to Boston, that he might assist in the ceremonies with which the founding of the Methodist chapel on Hanover avenue, was solemnized. Five years had he been laying siege to the almost inaccessible community of the Metropolis — returning from the attack, ever and anon, from his distant excursions; his perseverance, had, with the blessing of God, conquered at last, and he now erected a battery in its midst. On the 28th of August, he consecrated the corner-stone of the new temple, amidst the rejoicings and thanksgivings of the humble worshippers who had struggled to the utmost for its erection. It was located on a narrow lane in the present suburb of the city, but was for years a moral pharos, throwing an evangelical radiance over the mass of neglected population around it. The greatest men of our ministry have proclaimed the truth from its rude pulpit, and its humble communion has been adorned by some of the finest specimens of Christian character which have distinguished our history. Lee was three weeks in the city; during this time he took his stand, three successive Sabbaths, on the Common, where thousands heard the word of life from his lips, who would have gone no where else to hear it.

Leaving the work in Boston in charge of Mr. Harper, he went forth again on his travels, passing with rapid transitions in every direction. The unfortunate loss of his manuscripts has deprived us of most of the details of these tours. We glean from what data remain, a few notes of his labors the remainder of the present ecclesiastical year.

His first excursion was to Cape Cod. A Methodist preacher, on his voyage from New York to Nova Scotia, had been driven, by stress of weather, into Provincetown, and, as usual with our primitive ministry, improved the delay by preaching to the people. A profound impression was produced by his labors, and soon after his departure, urgent invitations came to Boston for further help. George Cannon was sent thither from the late Conference. Lee himself, now started to second his efforts, and passed down the whole length of the Cape, preaching at every opportunity on his way. When he arrived, he found that popular violence was raging against the young society. A town-meeting had formally voted against the erection of a Methodist church; the timber, which had already been collected for the building, had been destroyed by the rabble, and a tarred and feathered effigy of Mr. Cannon placed upon the ruins.

"I went to see it," says Lee, "and felt astonished at the conduct of the people, considering we live in a free country, and no such conduct can be justified; however, I expect this will be for the good of the little society, and that they shall find the truth of these words, 'the wrath of man shall praise thee.'"

The prediction has been verified. Extensive revivals of pure religion have prevailed there, Methodism has struck deep root into the soil, and its noble temple, seen from the waters as a prominent ornament of the town, is now filled by the largest and most influential congregation of its community.

Besides extensive labors in other parts of New England, Lee visited Maine twice before the ensuing Conference.

"Monday, 23d of November, I rode," he says, "to Bristol, and at 2 o'clock preached on II. Pet. 3: 14. This was the first Methodist sermon ever preached in Bristol. I could truly say the meeting was profitable to my soul. I then rode to Mr. Rust's, in Nobleborough, and at night, preached on Prov. 1: 22, 23. We had a solemn time. The people pressed me hard to send them a preacher, but I know not how I can do it, unless the Lord will send forth more laborers into his vineyard.

"Tuesday, 24th, I rode to New Milford, and held forth in the new meeting-house, on Rom. 2: 6. I had but few to hear; I suppose the head men were somewhat afraid, and therefore did not have proper notice given. The young candidate rode with me a few miles after meeting, and was not satisfied with my inviting all to Christ, and persuading them to choose religion and turn to God. I asked him if he did not believe that God had decreed that some men should not be saved? He said he did. I then asked him if he did not believe that Christ opened a way, by his death, whereby all might possibly be saved? he said he did. Then I told him, according to what he said, Christ had opened the way whereby God's decrees might be broken, and wished him to try and clear up the contradiction: he did try, and tried it often, till he was quite confused — and so we parted.

In the spring of 1796 he was again traversing the wilderness of Maine.

"Saturday, 7th of May," he writes, "I returned to Trenton, to Mr. James Smith's, at a place called Kilkenny, where at 2 o'clock I preached on Ezek. 18: 11. This was a thinly settled neighborhood; but I had quite a good company of hearers, and the Lord was present with us. I found great freedom in speaking and was melted into tears myself, and the people wept very freely. I felt so much for their poor souls, that I was willing to spend my life for their welfare. This was the first Methodist sermon ever preached in Trenton, and the people heard as though they were never to hear another. After meeting I rode to Union River, left my horse, went to Benjamin Joy's, and stayed all night.

"Sunday, 8th. At Mr. Joy's, on Union River, at 11 o'clock, I discoursed on *the one thing needful.* The day was wet, but thank God we had a good meeting. In the afternoon my text was Dan. 6: 16. The place seemed awful on account of the presence of the Lord. O, what a pity that so many people in this place should be destitute of regular preaching: many of them seem willing to hear the word. I felt thankful to God for bringing me amongst them once more."

On Tuesday, 10th, he passed down the river, got into a canoe with several other passengers, and went over to Mount Desert, where a multitude had gathered to witness a militia training. He thrust himself in among them, announcing his intention to preach.

"Many women," he says, "had also collected to see the men muster, and afterward to have a dance. But when they found out that I intended to preach, they were at a loss to know what to do; some said they would have a dance, others said nay, but we will have a sermon. The woman of the house said, if they would not hear the gospel, they should not dance. The man of the house spoke out aloud, saying, 'if the Lord has sent the man, let us hear him, but if the devil has sent him, let the devil take him away again.' So I told them I would preach at another house, at 4 o'clock."

He set off for the place but had a rencontre on the way with one of those sturdy theologians, who so often crossed his path in New England.

> "He was *brim full* of religious talk, but I soon discovered that he was a strong fatalist; when he found out that I believed that Christ died for all men, and that the Lord called all men, he got into a violent passion, and with abundance of fury, called it a *damnable doctrine*, and appeared to be ready to swear outright. Poor man! how small a thing is it for a man to call himself a Christian, while he is governed by wrath and an evil spirit."

Arriving at the appointed house, he preached with his usual power and effect.

> "The Lord was very precious to my soul, and many of the hearers were melted into tears, and heard the word as though it had been for their lives. But while I was preaching, the forementioned man, and another of his party, kept shaking their heads at each other, as much as to say, 'that's not true;' at last I stopped, and said to one of them, 'I should be glad if you will try and keep your head still;' he behaved better afterward. Mount Desert, is now divided into two towns; the one I preached in is called Eden. This was the first Methodist sermon ever preached in the town; and I feel a pleasing hope that a lasting blessing will attend it. I lodged with Mr. Paine that night.
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> "Friday, 17th of June. We left the two Brother Hulls and Brother Baker, in Falmouth, where I preached at 2 o'clock. I found much of the presence of God with me while preaching, and the word was attended with some power: many tears were shed. There has been a good stir of religion in this place, of late."

Returning from Maine, he continued his travels with unabated zeal, till the Conference at Thompson, Conn., in September, 1796. We have, however, no further particulars of his labors down to that period.

After about a year spent in traversing the Continent, as far as Georgia, Asbury was again approaching the East, to attend the Thompson Conference. On the 2d of Sept., he left New York city, where he had been meeting classes, visiting from house to house, and preaching continually, during two weeks, and, after many labors on the route, arrived at Redding, Conn., on the 6th. The society in that village, had been gradually gathering strength. They assembled to greet him at Mr. Sandford's, where he gave them an encouraging discourse from I. Peter 1: 13–15.

On Thursday, he reached New-Haven and "preached in Brother Thatcher's house, near the foundation of the college." "We were crowded," he writes, "and I was elaborate on Romans 1: 16–18; describing:

> "1. The most leading features that formed the character of the people addressed — elect — begotten again — scattered abroad by persecution and by the ministry of the word — suffering ministers and saints of God; 2. The subject on which they were addressed — to *gird up the loins of their mind,* and hope for great grace when Christ shall appear to overthrow Jewish superstition and heathen idolatry — *obedient children* — to fear, trust in, and love the Lord; and to keep all his commandments: to be holy, according to the nature and will of God, and his great and gracious promises."

On Friday he arrived at Middletown, where he spent the two ensuing days in holding a quarterly meeting — one of those public occasions, those holy re-unions at which the scattered brethren assembled from all parts, within twenty or thirty miles around, formed brotherly intimacies, related their Christian experience in the Love Feast, and having renewed their vows and zeal, again dispersed, strong in the common sympathy of their common course. At the present gathering, "there were present," says Asbury, "many brethren and sisters from distant towns." He stood up in their midst and encouraged them from I. Peter 4: 13–15: "*But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*" Before they parted he again discussed the prospect before them, from Isaiah 62: 12: "*They* *shall call them, the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, sought out, a city not forsaken.*"

The next day he was at Old Haddam, rejoicing to find there "some gracious souls," and a new Methodist chapel.

> "My body," he says, "is full of infirmities, and my soul of the love of God. I think that God is returning to this place; and that great days will yet come on in New England.
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> "Wednesday 14th. We passed Hadlime, thence to Millington, where we had many to hear, at kind Brother P——'s.
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> "Thursday 15th. I had twenty miles to New London. My brethren have given me work enough. I feel like a man of a feeble body, but my soul enjoys a sweet calm, and pure love; I cannot seek or desire any thing but God. I refused to go into the court-house to preach, but we had a gracious season at a dwelling house.
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> "Friday 16th. We came to Pogustonick, a little town of attentive people: I preached on "The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost:" an aged man cried out, and rising up at the close of the meeting, delivered his testimony."

On Saturday, 17th, he reached Norwich, where the Methodists of surrounding towns had gathered as at Middletown, for a Quarterly Meeting. They met in the Academy. He addressed to them also words of encouragement, from, "If ye be reproached for the cause of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part is glorified." He describes "the persons under sufferings — those who were the friends to, and followers of Jesus — partakers of the spirit of God, as a spirit of glory teaching them to believe, to love, and suffer, and give glory to God and Christ."

The Sabbath was a day of great interest. At 8 o'clock, A. M., was held the Love Feast.

> "It was a sweet, refreshing season; several talked very feelingly, among whom were some aged people; many praised God for the instrumentality of the Methodists in their salvation. My spirit felt awful this morning; and my body unwell; however, at the time appointed I began preaching on Romans 8: 6 — 8. Serious impressions appeared to be made on the minds of some of the audience. After spend-

ing about four hours in the congregation, (including sacrament and love-feast) I passed the afternoon in retirement at my lodgings, being unwell. This day I was led out greatly for New-England; I believe God will work among this people; perhaps they have not had such a time here for many years: the power of God was present; some felt as at heaven's gate — two or three aged women spoke as on the borders of eternity, and within sight of glory. Cold as the evening was, I was under the disagreeable necessity of riding ten miles; I crossed the Willimantink at Loyd's bridge, and came in late to brother Fuller's."

The next day he reached Thompson and prepared for the business of the Conference.

Thus closed the year 1795–6. It was a period of hard conflict, of advancement in some directions, but reverses in others. The aggregate of the returns of members was 2519, exhibiting a decrease of 56.*

Lynn reported a loss of 20; Marblehead, 22; Pittsfield, 94; Middletown, 6; New London, 14; Redding, 93; Tolland, 39. On the other hand there had been a gain of 105 in Maine and New Hampshire, and numerous conversions in Vermont which were not reported. The real loss was, therefore, probably smaller than it appears to be in the census.

But if there was a slight numerical declension, there was an actual growth of Methodism, in the invigoration of its organized plans, and the extension of its scope of operations. Its laborers had formed two new Circuits in Maine. They had penetrated into New Hampshire and Vermont, and had projected a vast Circuit in each. Lee had formerly preached the doctrines of Methodism in all the New England States, but before the present year its standards had been planted permanently only in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine, now they were reared to be furled no more in all the Eastern States. A net work of systematic labors extended into them all, from Norwalk in Connecticut to the Penobscot in Maine, and from Provincetown in Massachusetts to Montpelier in Vermont; and hereafter the progress of the new Communion is to advance, as we shall witness, with accelerated rapidity in every direction.

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* The returns from New England are accurately discriminated in the Minutes the present year, for the first time, from those of New York. This fact may account to some extent for the apparent diminution in the former.

The number of Circuits at the beginning of the year, was 19; those reported at its conclusion, amounted to 21; Orange and Needham, two of the former, were now merged, however, in neighboring appointments; there was, therefore, an actual gain of four.

# CHAPTER XXII.

## THE THOMPSON CONFERENCE.

Conference at Thompson, Conn., — Incidents of the Session — Asbury's Sermon — Cheering Reports from the Circuits — Heroic Death of Zadok Priest — Locations — Lorenzo Dow — Asbury leaves New England — List of Appointments — New Circuits — Kennebec — Bath — Chesterfield — Vershire — Outline of Labors.

THE Thompson Conference commenced on the 19th of September, 1796; most of the preachers arrived late, and the session did not begin till evening, but "that evening and the next morning, Tuesday, 20th, and Wednesday, 21st, we were," says Asbury, "closely employed." Here, as at New London the year before, they had not the convenience of a chapel for their deliberations, but were entertained with hearty hospitality by the young and devoted church, and assembled in an unfinished chamber, in the house of Captain Jonathan Nichols.* In this humble apartment did these men of great souls devise plans which comprehended the land, and extended to the end of time. About thirty were present, "some of whom," remarks Asbury, "were from the

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* Letter of Rev. H S. Ramsdel to the Writer.

Province of Maine, three hundred miles distant, who gave us a pleasing relation of the work of God in those parts." He preached to them in the rude chamber, enjoining upon them their ministerial duties to the people, from Acts 26: 18,19: "*To Open their eyes, and to turn them from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified,*" &c. The sermon was listened to with deep emotion by a crowded assembly, among whom sat the Parish clergyman, rapt in the interest of the occasion. To this day, the effect of the discourse is often mentioned among the reminiscences of the olden times, which are recalled in the conversations of veteran Methodists, who still survive in that neighborhood.

"We talked together, and rejoiced in the Lord," says Asbury. Enoch Mudge and Joshua Hall brought them refreshing reports from Maine. The former had witnessed the rapid spread of the truth along the banks of the Kennebec, where an additional Circuit had been formed; the latter had been proclaiming the message of life on both sides of the Penobscot, and though assailed on every hand with hostilities, had seen the arm of the Lord made bare, and souls turned from darkness unto light; they could both tell of hard fare, terrible winters, long journeys amidst driving storms, and comfortless lodgings in log cabins, through which the snow beat upon their beds, but also of divine consolations which had sanctified every suffering, and victories of the truth multiplying through the land. Lemuel Smith relieved the reports of declension from Massachusetts and Connecticut, by news of an extensive revival on Granville Circuit, where nearly one hundred souls had been gathered into the church since their last session. Lawrence McCoombs reported severe combats and serious losses on New London Circuit, but was undaunted in his characteristic courage and sanguine hopes. Cyrus Stebbins brought the mournful intelligence that one of their number had fallen in the field since they last met. The youthful and devoted Zadok Priest, who had been appointed the past year to Warren Circuit, had died in peace, after a brief Itinerant career of two years and a half. He was the first Methodist preacher who had ascended to heaven from New England; his brethren mourned that they should see him no more in the flesh, but rejoiced that he had fallen with his armor on and words of victory upon his lips. He died a martyr to the ministry, and presented in his last labors a sublime example of devotion to his work. Having been attacked some time before by hemorrhage of the lungs, he returned home to his friends to seek relief, but finding that pulmonary consumption had supervened, and no hope of restoration remained, he went forth again into the field to die heroically at his post, and there he remained till death smote him down.

Asbury ordained seven Deacons and five Elders, during the session. Lemuel Smith, Amos G. Thompson and John Hill compelled, probably, by sickness or want, took leave of their Itinerant brethren and retired into the local ranks; but other and mightier men — Timothy Meritt, John Broadhead, Elijah Woolsey, &c. — stepped into their places, and the New England Methodist ministry presented a more imposing aspect of strength than had yet distinguished it. An individual, subsequently noted through the nation, presented himself for admission among them, — the eccentric Lorenzo Dow, — but the discerning eye of Asbury perceived the peculiarity of his character, and his application was declined. He lingered about the place during the session, weeping sincere tears. "I took no food," he says, "for thirty-six hours" afterwards. He will make, by and by, a brief appearance in our narrative. On Wednesday the little band again dispersed, to sound the alarm through the length and breadth of the eastern

States. Asbury was away the next day, as usual; he rode thirty miles, to East Hartford, where he preached the same evening; the following day he was proclaiming the word in Waterbury. On Saturday he reached Stratford, where he spent the Sabbath. He says:

> "I have been under great heaviness, and was unwell in body. We have rode upwards of one hundred miles in the last three days; but still I must go on; there is no rest. I attended at Chesnut-Hill, and preached on I. Thess. 1: 5. This was the first house that was built for the Methodists in Connecticut, and it is not finished yet.
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> "Monday, 26th," he remarks, "we rode along to fairfield, Norwalk, and arrived at Stamford, about twenty-eight or thirty miles. On our way we stopped to feed our horses, and found a woman that was sick, with whom I talked and prayed. We crossed the State line and came to New Rochelle, in New York, twenty-three miles — heavy and hungry."

The following was the schedule of appointments for the year. Jesse Lee, *Elder; Greenwich*, Stephen Hull; *Warren*, Daniel Ostrander; *Boston* and *Needham*, George Pickering, Joshua Hall; *Lynn*, James Covel; *Marblehead*, George Cannon; *Chesterfield*, Philip Wager; *Portland*, Jesse Stoneman; *Readfield*, Cyrus Stebbins, John Broadhead; *Bath*, Enoch Mudge; *Penobscot*, Elias Hull; *Provincetown*, Robert Yellalee; *Kennebec*, Aaron Humphrey; *Vershire*, Nicholas Snethen; *New London*, Nathaniel Chapin, Timothy Meritt; *Pomfret*, Joel Ketchum, Daniel Brumley; *Middletown*, Joshua Taylor, Lawrence McCoombs; *Tolland*, Evan Rogers, Thomas Coope; *Litchfield*, Daniel Dennis, Wesley Budd; *Granville*, Joseph Mitchel, Ralph Williston; *Redding*, Elijah Woolsey, Robert Leeds; *Pittsfield*, Timothy Dewy. The last eight Circuits were included in the New York District, under the superintendence of Garrettson and Sylvester Hutchinson.

The four new Circuits of the year, were Kennebec and Bath, in Maine, Chesterfield, in New Hampshire, and Vershire, in Vermont. The first included "the upper towns on the Kennebec River."* It was afterwards called the Norridgwock Circuit, and extended among the frontier settlements of that day. "We had good times in that part of the country," says Lee, speaking of the date of its formation, "and many souls to this day have cause to bless God that ever we preached the gospel among them, and that ever they cast their lots among us."† The Bath Circuit comprehended the region about the mouth of the Kennebec. Lee informs us, that "the preacher was to spend most of his time in the town of Bath, but was to travel as far as the town of Union." ‡ "We were not as successful," he remarks, "in the town of Bath as we were in many other places; disputes about the settled preacher ran high, and the contention was too severe on both sides. In Union there was a good work begun, and souls were awakened and brought to God."§ Chesterfield Circuit was so called after the town of that name in the southwest angle of New Hampshire. It was in this town that the first Methodist society of the State was formed, in the latter part of 1795, whereby Methodism completed its introduction into the series of the American States. "There were, at this time," says Lee, "but few that felt freedon to unite with us; yet after some time, a few more cast in their lots, and other societies were soon formed in other places." This Circuit spread its labors over more than fifty miles square." Vershire Circuit was the first one formed in Vermont. "It reached," Lee tells us, "from the towns near the Connecticut River, to Montpelier." Subsequently it included a vast range of travel, scarcely less than four hundred miles, comprehending about twenty-five townships, and all the Methodist field in the State, east of the Green Mountains.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Anno 1794. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

"Many of the places," writes Lee, "where we preached in that Circuit, were quite new settlements; the houses were very small, and but scattering through the country. The preachers had to encounter many difficulties, and to endure many hardships. But one thing which made up for all the difficulties, was this, the people were fond of attending meeting by day or night, and were very kind to the preachers. And the best of all was, sinners were awakened, and in a little time some of them became the happy subjects of the favor of God, and were zealously engaged in trying to help forward the work of the Lord as far as they could. Since then, we have prospered considerably in this new part of the country."

*Twenty-one* Circuits, *one* District, and a large portion of a second, together with *thirty-one* Itinerant laborers, constituted the plan of labor for the year 1796–7.

# CHAPTER XXIII.

## SKETCHES OF PREACHERS.

Ralph Williston — Robert Yellalee — Anecdote — Elijah Woolsey — John Brodhead — His early Christian Experience — Itinerant Labors — Character — Personal Appearance — Timothy Merritt — His History and Character.

NINE preachers received appointments this year in New England, for the first time.

RALPH WILLISTON entered the Itinerancy the present year, and labored as colleague of Joseph Mitchell, on Granville Circuit, Mass. The next year, he was appointed to Vershire, Vt., and was the second Methodist preacher regularly sent to the State of Vermont. The following three years he was appointed successively to Lynn, Massachusetts, and the Merrimac, N. H., and Hawke, N. H., Circuits. In 1801, he passed to Maine, where he continued two years, in charge of a District which comprehended the entire Methodist interest of the Province. Timothy Merritt, Asa Heath, Oliver Beale, Philip Munger, and other able men, were under his superintendence. He left New England in 1803, and was appointed to New York city, as colleague of Thomas Morrell and Michael Coate. The next year, he passed still farther southward, and labored on Annapolis Circuit, Md. He afterwards travelled the Fredericktown Circuit, Md., one year, when he withdrew from his fellow-laborers, and found repose, if not usefulness, in the Lutheran, and later in the Protestant Episcopal church. He was settled some time in the city of New York, whence he removed to the South.*

Robert Yellalee was born in Newcastle, Northumberland county, England, in 1766. He commenced preaching when he was twenty-two years old.

He used to relate many interesting anecdotes of persecutions which he suffered in the land of his nativity, while a local preacher, one of which we will record. While on his way to an appointment, he was informed of an individual who was intending to take his life. Nothing daunted, trusting in God, he went forward and commenced the meeting. After the introductory exercises, he selected for a text, "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker," Isaiah 45: 9. He beheld before him, a man whose countenance betrayed a war of contending passion. The sermon proceeded. The power of the Most High descended. Presently a long knife dropped from the sleeve of the man, to the floor, and at the close of the discourse he came forward trembling and weeping, confessed the intention of his heart, and begged for the prayers of his proposed victim.

In 1796, he was ordained Elder by Bishop Coke, for the Foulah Mission, Africa. In company with others, he embarked for Sierra Leone. Their ship came to anchor in the harbor, at night. "In the morning, as the sea presented a mirror surface, hundreds of human beings might be seen gathering on the shore. Soon the placid calm was disturbed by the swift-plied paddles and gliding canoes with which the water was interspersed. While they approached the ship, they sung,

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* Bangs' Hist. of Methodism, vol. II., p. 189.

'How beauteous are their feet,
Who stand on Zion's hill,' &c.

The converted natives had been informed that there were missionaries on board. War some time afterward broke out, and, together with other circumstances, rendered it necessary for the missionaries to leave."*

Mr. Y. sailed for America, joined the Methodist Itinerants of New England in 1796, and was appointed to Provincetown, Mass. In 1797, he was colleague of Joshua Taylor, on Readfield Circuit, Maine, and the next year, of Aaron Humphrey, on Bath and Union Circuits, in the same State. In 1799, his domestic circumstances compelled him to locate. He resided, till his death, in Maine, usefully employed as a local preacher. He founded the church at Saco, and planted the germs of many others, while travelling in that State. It was his happiness to receive into the church the present Senior Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal church South. He died July 12th, 1846, in the seventy-eight year of his age. He was a man of but ordinary talents, but of an excellent heart. His death was attended with the peace and victory of faith. "The sun of righteousness which had been," says one who attended him, "his light for above sixty years, shone with higher brightness in the hour when he was called to enter the vale of death.†

Elijah Woolsey began his Itinerant labors in 1793, on Cambridge Circuit, N. Y., as colleague of Joel Ketchum. The next year he went to the help of Dunham and Coleman, in Upper Canada, where he labored arduously during two years. In 1796, he returned, and entering New England, travelled the Redding Circuit, Conn., with Robert Leeds. He located the next year, but in 1800 resumed his ministerial travels on Newburg Circuit, N. Y. The following two years he spent on Flanders Circuit, N. J. In 1803, he was appointed Presiding Elder of Albany District, which he continued to superintend till 1807, when he was stationed at Brooklynn. The next year he travelled Croton Circuit, and in 1809 returned to New England and labored on Pittsfield Circuit, Mass. The three ensuing years he spent in New York, on Duchess Circuit and Rhinebeck District — one year on the latter. He re-entered New England in 1813, and travelled, respectively, Middletown, Stratford and Redding Circuits, in Connecticut. The next eight years he labored on Duchess, Courtlandt, Newburg, Croton and New Rochelle Circuits, in New York. In 1824, he was again in New England, travelling Redding Circuit. The year following, he was among the supernumeraries, and labored on Courtlandt Circuit, N. Y., but in 1826 returned to Connecticut, and travelled the Stamford Circuit. He continued there two years, the last which he spent in the Eastern States. In 1828, he had charge of New Rochelle Circuit, N. Y. He preached as a supernumerary nine years more, five on Courtlandt Circuit and four on that of New Rochelle, and in 1838 was returned on the roll of superannuated veterans, where he still continues. His Itinerant ministry extended through forty-four laborious and successful years. Venerable with age and virtues, Mr. Woolsey still lingers in the church, a beloved remnant of " the noble army " of Itinerants who founded American Methodism. We regret that we are not able to give a fuller outline of his protracted and useful ministry.

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* Zion's Herald, July 16, 1845.

† Zion's Herald, August 19th, 1846.

John Brodhead's name is endeared to New England Methodists, and yet the information which remains respecting him is too scanty to admit of a biographical sketch in any wise adequate to his prominent position in our history. He was born in Smithfield, Northampton county, Pennsylvania, October 5th, 1770. Like most of the distinguished evangelists already noticed in these pages, he was blessed with the lessons and examples of a pious mother, and was the subject of deep religious convictions, when but a child. "He has been heard to say that he never forgot the impressions made upon his mind, while kneeling at his mother's feet, learning his little prayers."* This early seriousness disappeared amidst the gaiety and temptations of youth, but about his twenty-second or twenty-third year, he was awakened to a sense of his danger, and made a subject of the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. The Methodist Circuit preachers had been accustomed to visit his father's neighborhood, occasionally, for years. One evening, after hearing a very powerful discourse, he returned home and retired to an adjacent barn with a sadness of heart which sought to indulge its sorrow in solitude. It was there, as he has often been heard to say, that he heard a voice, as it were, addressing him personally, and saying in solemn and most impressive tones, "Prepare to meet thy God." Till this time, he had attempted to conceal his feelings, but now his distress became so great that he resolved to disguise it no longer. He declared at once that he felt himself a guilty and condemned sinner, exposed to the wrath of God, and began to pray for mercy with earnestness and tears. He went about exhorting his youthful companions in sin to set out with him in seeking the salvation of their souls, declaring that if there was mercy for him he was resolved never to rest till he should find it. One of his associates told him that "he was beside himself — that the Methodists had made him crazy;" but he replied that "it was otherwise — that he had been beside himself most of his days, but was now returning to his right mind." His zeal in seeking the salvation of his own soul, and his ardent efforts in behalf of others, became so great, that God made him the instrument of the awakening of several of his friends, even before he himself had found the consolations of the Spirit.

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* Letter from Rev. S. Norris to the Writer.

He continued thus seeking the salvation of himself and others till the favor of God dawned upon his soul, and the Divine Spirit bore witness with his spirit that he had passed from death unto life. Joyful with the consciousness of a regenerated heart, and anxious to bring others to like precious faith, he immediately began to testify the goodness of God to his own soul, and to prepare for the responsible work of the Christian ministry. He entered the Itinerant service in 1794, a year in which Beauchamp, Snethen, Canfield, Joseph Mitchell and other New England evangelists, commenced their travels. Mr. Brodhead's first Circuit was that of Northumberland, Pa. In 1795, he was appointed to Kent, Del. The next year he came to New England, and took the distant appointment of Readfield, Me., then one of the only three Circuits in that Province. In 1797, he passed to Massachusetts, and was appointed to Lynn and Marblehead; the following year he was removed to Rhode Island, and labored on Warren Circuit. In 1799, he returned to Maine, and resumed his labors on Readfield Circuit, as colleague of Nathan Emory; the next year he passed through a long transference to Connecticut, and took charge for two years of the New London District, where he superintended the labors of Ruter, Branch, Vannest, Sabin, Ostrander, and other "mighty men." In 1802, he travelled the Vershire District, chiefly, in Vermont. The next year he was appointed to Hanover, N. H., and the three following years had charge of the New Hampshire District. He returned to Massachusetts in 1807, and travelled, during two years, the Boston District, with a host of able men under him, among whom were Pickering, Webb, Munger, Steele, Kibby, Merwin, Ruter, &c. The next four years he was appointed, respectively, to Portsmouth and Newmarket, (two years at each,) after which he was four years on the superannuated list, but took an appointment again, in 1820, at Newmarket and Kingston, as colleague of Joseph A. Merrill. He was now advanced in years, and afflicted with infirmities — hence his subsequent appointments exhibit much irregularity. He was again in the superannuated ranks in 1821, but took an appointment the next two years as colleague of Phineas Crandall, at Newmarket; the ensuing three years he was on the supernumerary list, but labored as he was able at Newmarket and Epping, N. H. In 1827, he resumed an effective relation to the Conference, and labored two years, respectively, at Newmarket and Poplin, N. H.; the following two years he was left without an appointment, at his own request. In 1831, he was again placed on the supernumerary list, and continued there till 1833, when he resumed effective service, and was appointed to Salisbury and Exeter, N. H. The next year we find him among the supernumeraries, where he continues until 1837, when he once more entered the Itinerant ranks, and, as was befitting a veteran so distinguished, died there after a year's service at Seabrook and Hampton Mission, N. H. He spent forty-four years in the ministry, forty-two of them in the East, laboring more or less in all the New England States. He died April 7th, 1838, of a disease of the heart, from which he had suffered for a number of years. His departure was peaceful and triumphant. The Boston Post paid the following tribute to his memory, at the time:

"Possessing naturally a strong mind, warm affections and an imposing person, he was a popular as well as an able and pious preacher;

and probably no man in New England had more personal friends, or could exercise a more widely extended influence. He was repeatedly elected to the Senate of his adopted State and to Congress, yet was always personally averse to taking office; and though he spoke but seldom on political subjects, the soundness of his judgment and the known purity of his life, gave much weight to his opinions. In the early days of his ministry he endured almost incredible fatigue and hardship in carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to remote settlements, often swimming rivers on horseback, and preaching in his clothes saturated with water, till he broke down a naturally robust constitution, and laid the foundation of disease, which affected him more or less during his after life. In his last days, the gospel, which he had so long and so faithfully preached to others, was the never failing support of his own mind. To a brother clergyman who inquired of him, a short time before his death, how he was, he said — "The old vessel is a wreck, but I trust in God the cargo is safe."

He "was a *good* man; deeply pious, ardently and sincerely devoted to the interests of the church and world; it is known to all who were acquainted with the untarnished excellence of his character that a great man and a prince has fallen in Israel."* This brief, but significant remark, is all that the public Records of the church have noted respecting the character of one of the most beloved names of its early history, and we draw this short narrative of his life to a close with the melancholy conviction that it is totally, though necessarily, unworthy of his exalted excellencies and services.

Mr. Brodhead was a true Christian gentleman, courteous, unaffectedly dignified, and yet of a temper so kindly and benign, that all who approached him loved him, and even little children found in him an endearing reciprocation of their tender sympathies; he was universally a favorite among them.

His moral character was pre-eminently pure and lovely. He was ever hopeful, confiding in God and in man, forbearing towards the weak, co-working with the strong, instant in prayer, living by faith, entertaining large and apostolical views of the gracious provisions of the gospel and the gracious purposes of Providence. All felt in his company that they were in the presence of a large-minded, pure-hearted, and an unlimitedly trustworthy man. With such a character he could not but be generally popular, and such was the respect and esteem entertained for him by his fellow citizens of New Hampshire that, besides important offices in their State Legislature and Executive Council, he was sent by them, during a term of four years, as their representative in the Congress of the United States, and his consent alone was necessary to have secured to him the supreme office of the State. While in civil offices he retained unabated the fervency of his spiritual zeal, in Washington he maintained, at his lodgings, a weekly prayer-meeting, which was composed of his fellow legislators; and on Sabbaths he preached, more or less, in all the neighboring Methodist churches.

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* Minutes of 1838.

As a preacher, he possessed more than ordinary talents; his clear understanding, combined with quick sensibilities and a vivid imagination, could not but render him eloquent on the themes of religion. He was partial to the benigner topics of the gospel, and often would his congregations and himself melt into tears under the inspiration of his subjects. When he treated on the divine denunciations of sin, it was with a solemnity, and at times with an awful grandeur that overwhelmed his hearers. "I heard him," says a veteran of our ministry,* "when I was a young man, preach on the Last Judgment, in Bromfield street chapel, on a Sabbath evening, and if the terrible reality had occurred that night its impression could hardly have been more awfully alarming." At such times, "seeing the terror of the Lord," he persuaded men with a resistless eloquence, his large person and noble countenance seemed to expand with the majesty of his thoughts, and he stood forth before the awe-struck assembly with the authority of an ambassador of Christ.

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* Rev. T. C. Peirce.

Mr. Brodhead's personal appearance was unusually interesting. He was six feet in stature, with an erect and firmly built frame. Though slight in person when young, in his maturer years he became robustly stout, and towards the end of his life somewhat corpulent, but retained to the last the dignified uprightness of his mien. His complexion was light, features well defined, forehead high and expanded, his eye dark, large and glowing with the spontaneous benevolence of his spirit. In fine, his *tout ensemble* rendered him one of the noblest men in person, as he unquestionably was in character.

TIMOTHY MERRITT was a prince and a great man in our Israel. He was born in Barkhamstead, Conn., Oct. 1775, and trained in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," by devoted parents, who were early members of the Methodist Episcopal church in that State. About the seventeenth year of his life, he experienced the renewing grace of God. Religion entirely imbued his nature, and marked him, from that period to his death, as a consecrated man. One who first led him into the pulpit, and who held with him during life the communion of a most intimate friendship,* gives the following sketch of his history:

> I became acquainted with him at his father's, in the town of Barkhamstead, in the north-western part of the State of Connecticut, in the year 1794. Here I was introduced to Timothy Merritt, as a pious young man of great hope and promise to the infant church in that place and vicinity. Ufter attending the usual preaching and other exercises at Barkhamstead, on the forenoon of the Sabbath, he accompanied me about five or six miles to another appointment, and, probably for the first time, took a part in the public exercises of the sanctuary. He had before been in the habit of improving his gifts in private and social meetings. He entered the travelling connection in 1796, and was stationed on New London Circuit, on which I had travelled in '94. This Circuit, at that time, was about three hundred miles in extent.

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* Rev. Enoch Mudge.

Here he was both acceptable and useful. The next year, 1797, he joined me in my labors on Penobscot Circuit, in the province of Maine. His presence to me was as the coming of Titus to Paul — II. Cor. 7: 6. We entered heart and hand into the arduous labors required of us in that new country, where we had to cross rivers by swimming our horses, ford passes, and thread our way into new settlements by marked trees. The Lord gave him favor in the eyes of the people, and his heart was encouraged and his hands strengthened by a good revival, in which much people were added unto the Lord. Here our sympathies and Christian friendship were matured and strengthened as the friendship of David and Jonathan.

The next year, 1798, he was stationed on Portland Circuit, where he continued two years. In 1800 and 1801 he was stationed on Bath and Union Circuit; and in 1802 on Bath station. On all these appointments he saw the fruits of his labors, and had living seals of his ministry. During these years, our correspondence was constant and highly interesting to me, giving evidence of a rapid improvement in his mental and moral powers. In 1803 he located, and continued in Maine about ten or eleven years, and then removed to the place of his nativity, and remained in that region until 1817, when he again entered the Itinerancy.

The fourteen years of his location were years of great labor, toil and hardship. He did not locate to leave the work, but that the infant churches might be eased of the burden of supporting him and his growing family, and that they might have no excuse for not supporting their regular stationed preachers.

Besides the constant and arduous labors required for his own support, he was abundant in his ministerial exertions,—filling appointments in different towns constantly on the Sabbath, and delivering occasional week-day lectures; as most of the stationed preachers were unordained, he had to visit the societies to administer the ordinances, and assist in organizing and regulating affairs necessary for the peace and prosperity of the cause. Occasionally he attended Quarterly Meetings for the Presiding Elders, from twenty to a hundred miles from home, taking appointments in his way to visit the churches. He went to his appointments in canoes, and skated to them in winters, on the streams and rivers, ten, twelve, or fourteen miles.

When he re-entered the travelling connection, in 1817, he was stationed in Boston. Here we had the unspeakable satisfaction of uniting in mutual labor for two years. My health being very poor at this time, he was always ready to take the burden and the short end of the yoke. As some of our aged friends there will recollect, we had members living at Charlestown, Chelsea, Cambridge, Roxbury, Dedham, Nantasket, &c. These we had to visit and hold meetings with them as our labors could be spared from the city; Br. Merritt always volunteering when he thought it would relieve me. In 1819 he was stationed at Nantucket, but in 1820 he joined me in Lynn, and was stationed at Wood End, where he remained two years. In 1821 we had a gracious revival of religion at Lynn, and received, as the fruit of it, about a hundred members, many of whom lived to sympathize with him in his last afflictions, and to witness to the church the fidelity of his pastoral care and labor.

In 1822 he was stationed in Providence, R. I. In 1823 and '24 in Bristol, R. I., and I succeeded him in Providence, so that we again had the happiness of being frequently together. In 1825 and '26 he was again stationed in Boston, which gives good evidence how acceptable his labors were on that station. From hence, in 1827, he went to Springfield, where he continued two years. In 1829 and 1830 he was stationed at New Bedford, where now he has living epistles of his ministry. In 1831 he was stationed at Malden, and devoted much of his time to the editorial duties of Zion's Herald. In 1832–3–4 and '5 he was at New York, as assistant editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal.

Thence he returned to the New England Conference, and was stationed at Lynn, South street. Here he continued two years. His health and physical energies failing, he received a superannuated relation to the Conference, which continued till life closed.

Thus have I traced the scenes of his long, laborious and useful life, in which much people have been added unto the Lord. But who can tell how many will be the stars in his crown? Let eternity declare!

Mr. Merritt possessed a rare intellectual vigor. His judgment was remarkably clear and discriminating, grasping the subjects of its investigation, in all their compass, and penetrating to their depths. He lacked fancy and imagination, but was thereby, perhaps, the better fitted for his favorite courses of thought,—the investigation and discussion of the great doctrinal truths of religion. His predilection for such subjects was not a curious propensity to speculation, but an interest to ascertain and demonstrate the relations of fundamental tenets to experimental and practical piety. This was the distinguishing characteristic of his preaching. Like St. Paul, he delighted to discuss the "Mystery of Godliness," and illustrated its "Greatness." Dangerous error shrunk in his presence. While at Springfield, Mass., he was drawn into a public controversy with a preacher of Universalism, and sustained himself with so much vigor in the debate that his opponent was utterly overthrown, and the false doctrine routed from the town for several years, so far, at least, as any organized support of it was concerned. The great doctrine of Christian perfection was his favorite theme. He was a living example of this truth.

His friend, from whom we have already quoted, gives the following sketch of his character.

> Holiness to the Lord, was his constant motto. He was emphatically a man of a single eye, a man of one work. He literally forsook all to follow Christ and seek the salvation of his fellow-men. Both his mental and physical system were formed for the work. He had a muscular energy which was fitted for labor and fatigue, so that he delighted to say,
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> "Labor is rest, and toil is sweet,
> If thou my Lord art here."
>
> I remember his saying to me, one morning, after having performed what to me and others would have been a fatiguing journey, "I feel as fresh to start, if it were needful, on a journey of a thousand miles, as I did when I started on this." His mind was of a thoughtful and serious turn, and of great activity. He was constantly grasping for new subjects of thought and new scenes of usefulness.
>
> His zeal was a steady, active, glowing fire, seldom showing itself in a sudden, much less flickering flame. The language of his heart seemed to be,
>
> "No cross, no suffering I decline,
> Only let all my heart be thine."
>
> He had a strong, holy jealousy for the truth of God, and the common sins and errors of the day found no favor from him.
>
> He met the opposers of truth with a calm and fearless mind. His pocket Bible was his armor. He early became a good textuary, free and ready in his selections of truth, adapted to every occasion. He seldom failed to convince those who attacked him, that they had no contemptible antagonist. He was plain and direct in his reproofs of error and sin; never flippant and wordy, but pursuing his antagonist closely with home thrusts of truth.
>
> Genuine Christian humility was an eminent trait in his character. All his devotional exercises manifested this in a manner worthy of imitation. In prayer he was grave, solemn and fervent. In public devotions I have sometimes seen him when he appeared as if alone with his God. There was never an undue familiarity of expression fell from his lips. In this respect he truly sanctified the Lord God in his heart, and honored him with his lips.
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> Mr. Merritt's gravity was not sour or sombre, so as to render him unsocial or unamiable. I ever found in him one of the most free and social companions of my life. He cherished a deep regard for all

the great and benevolent movements of the church, such as the Bible and Missionary, the Sabbath School and Education, the Temperance and Anti-slavery causes. All these early enlisted his sympathies. For them he prayed and plead, for them he wrote, and to them he contributed to the extent of his ability.

The outpourings of his amiable heart never appeared more interesting and excellent than in his confidential correspondence, which I have had the happiness to enjoy for more than forty years, and to which I never refer without the purest pleasure. Here his mind and heart appear in naked loveliness.

As a preacher his subjects in general were well chosen, his manner serious, plain, distinct and direct. He was often doctrinal, and in these discourses he stated his object, presenting his propositions with precision, and brought his Scripture proofs aptly, fully, and forcibly. His inferences and reflections were various and pertinent. He felt he was called to defend the great doctrines of the gospel, and did it fearlessly, searching out and exposing error and detecting sophistry. But his most delightful theme was the doctrine of holiness. In treating this he found ample scope for illustrating every part of Christian experience, and of explaining and enforcing all the practical duties enjoined in the gospel.

There were no flashes of wit, no efforts of eloquence to excite a stare, no meretricious drapery, no bombast, no passionate exclamations for effect, no useless verbiage to fill an empty space — but a straightforward, plain effort to open, explain and improve the subject and to profit his hearers. Although his manner was neither remarkably easy nor eloquent — it was more, for it was generally acceptable and profitable. For the word of Christ dwelt richly in him, and it flowed out with intelligence and to edification, so that the more serious part of his hearers were always satisfied. The duties of a pastor were conscientiously and faithfully performed by him, as the various places of his charge can testify.

When Mr. Merritt's physical energy gave way, his active mind felt the shock and totterings of the earthly tabernacle. This was the time for the more beautiful development of Christian resignation and calm submission. He wrestled to sustain himself under the repeated shocks of a species of paralysis which weakened his constitution and rendered it unfit for public labor, by clouding and bewildering the mind. But here patience had her perfect work. A calm submission spread a sacred halo over the closing scenes of life. Even here we have a chastened and melancholy pleasure in noticing the superiority of the mental and spiritual energies, which occasionally gleamed out over his physical imbecility and prostration. We saw a noble temple in ruins, but the divine Shekinah had not forsaken it.

Another of his intimate associates,* gives us the following estimate of his character.

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* Rev. James Porter.

No man has been taken from the Itinerant ranks of New England, who had a higher claim to an honorable memorial among us than had Mr. Merritt. He was a *learned* man — a man thoroughly read in divinity and philosophy — critical in his observations — powerful in analysis — of untiring application — deeply experienced in the things of God — always exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit by the patience of faith and the labors of love. But he was a *self-taught* man. Some of the first pieces he published, he wrote, corrected and threw aside; re-wrote, corrected and wrote again, even to the fourth time, before he allowed them to go to press. By this process he acquired a terse, perspicuous and beautiful style. The attention he bestowed upon the arguments of an opponent, before answering him, was remarkable. He weighed every word, and comprehended it, before he framed a sentence, and then replied in the most concise and forcible manner possible. Thus he seldom misunderstood or misrepresented — always kept directly to the point, and seldom failed of complete victory. There was a dignified simplicity, a loftiness of language and thought, accompanied by a solemnity and fervency of spirit, which awed the hearer, and made him feel that God was near, and not unfrequently, as the good man's soul filled and gathered strength, and in the might and majesty of confiding faith, rose higher and higher still, the spectator would stand entranced, like an astonished Israelite looking up into the mountain to see Moses talking with God. The missionary enterprize was dear to his heart. Speaking on the subject about the time our lamented brothers,Cox and Wright, were fitting for Africa, he remarked with great animation, mingled with regret, that if he was only a little younger he would rejoice to give his life to the heathen. Every benevolent movement had his approval and his prayers. He was liberal in his pecuniary contributions nearly to a fault. When old age and infirmity had wasted his energies, his big heart still impelled him to a liberality which greatly exceeded his means. He was an abolitionist. He early embraced the leading sentiment of the party, viz.: that slavery is *sin* — sin *per se*, and that its abolition is the duty of the master and the right of the slave. These views, with others necessarily growing out of them, he ably defended at no little sacrifice — not as mere opinions, or "*abstractions*," but as settled *principles*, clearly taught by the founder of Methodism, and formerly embraced and advocated by the Methodist Episcopal Church. But in his controversies upon this question he happily avoided the errors of some others. He never indulged in severe personalities, or in asperity of temper. Though often misunderstood, and not treated with all that consideration he deserved, he possessed his soul in patience, and loved his brethren from whom he differed with sincere affection. But, however hot the storm of opposition waxed around him, he stood firm — true to his sentiments as the needle to its pole. Thus he lived and died, and is embalmed in the recollections of all who had the honor of his acquaintance, as an inflexible and able advocate of the rights of the enslaved. Venerable Man! May we, his survivors, prove ourselves worthy representatives of such a father, by a grateful remembrance and imitation of his virtues. In a word, he was a great and good man — an indulgent husband and father — a bright and shining light in the world. More genuine meekness — more modest magnanimity — more Christian urbanity and intelligent devotion to God, it has never fallen to my lot to behold in one mortal man.

Mr. Merritt has left some valuable productions — "The Christian's Manual," "The Converts Guide," a volume of his controversy on Universalism at Springfield, including discourses of his friend Dr. Fisk, delivered on the same occasion, and several able sermons in pamphlet form. His contributions to our periodicals were very numerous and always able.

# CHAPTER XXIV.

## EVENTS AND RESULTS OF 1797.

Lee's Appointment — Power and Success of the Early Itinerant Ministry — Asbury Prostrated — Success of the Year.

Lee was reappointed to his former District, at the Thompson Conference, but passed, immediately after the session, to Baltimore, to attend the General Conference, which commenced on the 20th of October. He took an active part in its proceedings. Before returning, he visited his paternal home, in Virginia, having been absent four years.

He resumed his labors in New England in January, 1797, and was happy to find the cause of God advancing on many of the Circuits. His District comprised the whole Methodist field in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, except two western Circuits in the latter; Ostrander, Pickering, Brodhead, Mudge, Snethen and other strong men, were under his guidance — mighty men, who went through the land like flames of fire. One who witnessed their labors, thus describes them:

It is now both pleasing and profitable to reflect, with what divine power the gospel was accompanied, and the surprising effects it produced in the hearts of the people, as it was preached by the Methodist ministry at that time. "It came not in word only, but in power." The preachers from the South came among us in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ; in faith and much assurance in the Holy Ghost; fearing nothing, and doubting nothing. The love of Christ constraining them, they came in the name of the Lord to sound the trump of jubilee, and to invite the dying sinners of New England to come to Christ and live. They came not in vain. They appeared in our midst with warm hearts, devoting both soul and body to the important interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. A divine unction attended the word, "and fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces." They ran in every direction, kindling and spreading the holy flame, which all the united powers of opposition were unable to quench, for it burned with an inextinguishable blaze. Many were added to the church of such as shall be saved. It was not uncommon, in the early days of Methodism in these parts, among the solemn-listening multitude, to see mournful weeping eyes, and to hear deep, pensive sighs and groans, and sometimes heart-rending cries for mercy, that not only exceedingly affected and overwhelmed the whole congregation, but made the very pillars of corruption tremble! Hence, reformations became frequent, deep and powerful, and many ran to and fro, saying, "These are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation." Thus these preachers became "a spectacle to angels and men." Sometimes, persons felt the gospel to be the power of God unto salvation before they left the house, and went home praising God. Under one sermon, in some cases, fifteen or twenty would be awakened, and numbers brought into the liberty of the gospel of the blessed Savior. In the darkness of the midnight hour, while the senses of the preacher were fast locked in sleep, a tap on the window of his apartment would break in upon his slumbers, and some voice, in a pensive, trembling tone, might be heard, "Sir, my wife, or daughter, is in great distress of mind, and wants you to come and pray with her. Come now; she cannot wait until morning." This work was so powerful, that whole towns and villages, in some instances, were arrested by the influences of the gospel. Every face wore a solemn aspect, and for a time, profanity was unheard and unknown, the places of mirth and amusement were brought low, and every countenance seemed to say, "What do these things mean?" Not only the poor and the obscure, but the rich and the great, in some cases, bowed down under the majesty of the gospel. The great work of God, through the instrumentality of the pioneers of Methodism in New England, subjected them to many, very many sufferings and privations. The labor was great and extensive. They travelled and preached almost every day for months together. But they endured hunger and thirst, cold and heat, persecutions and reproaches, trials and temptations, weariness and want, as good soldiers of the cross of Christ; not counting their ease and pleasure, friends and homes, health and life, dear to themselves, so that they might bring sinners to God and finish their work with joy. Few, and but very few, of them remain to the present time; they have fallen asleep. They did much to prepare the more improved and happy state of things enjoyed by the present ministry, who occupy the same fields of labor. Their works and labors of love are now almost forgotten. Peace to their ashes. Those of them who still continue with us, are yet suffering the will of God, in joyful expectation of an immortal crown of glory that fadeth not away." *

Such were the labors of the strong men whom Lee led in the early battles of New England, himself, meanwhile, excelling them all. He traversed his immense District with his usual rapidity, proclaiming the word continually, encouraging the preachers in the privations and toils of the remoter Circuits, comforting feeble churches, and inspiriting them to struggle with persecutions and poverty, to erect chapels and spread themselves out into adjacent neighborhoods.

Towards September, 1797, Asbury, sick, and worn out with labors, was pursuing his way towards the East, to attend the next New England Conference, which was to set at Wilbraham on the 19th of that month; but on arriving at New Rochelle, N. Y., he was disabled from proceeding any further. He was "swelling in the face, bowels and feet," and only after two weeks could he place his foot on the ground. On September 12th, when he was able to walk only once or twice across the room, he wrote a letter to Lee, instructing him to preside at the Wilbraham Conference, believing it would be impossible for himself to reach it. Though depressed with disease and exhaustion, his heart glowed with the idea of the great cause for which he labored. "Methodism," he exclaims, in this letter, "is union all over; union in exchange of preachers; union in exchange of sentiments; union in

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* Rev. Epaphras Kibby.

exchange of interest: we must draw resources from the centre to the circumference."

Notwithstanding the arrangement made with Lee, the veteran Bishop was on his route for Wilbraham the day after the date of his letter, but was unable to proceed, and returned to his comfortable lodgings at New Rochelle, where he went to bed with a high fever. He was disabled for several weeks, and "distressed at the thought of a useless and idle life." "Lord help me," he exclaims, "for I am poor and needy; the hand of God hath touched me."

Lee proceeded to take his place at the Conference.

The labors of the year had been successful; extensive revivals had occurred on several of the Circuits. There was a gain of three Circuits, though owing to the fact that two (Greenwich and Marblehead) which had been distinct, were now merged in neighboring appointments, the numerical gain is but one. The returns of members amounted to 3000, lacking one; exhibiting an increase of 480 — about one fourth of the gains of the whole church for that year. Both the aggregate and the increase were doubtless larger, for there are no returns from Vermont, though an extensive Circuit had been formed within that State, and one of the New York Circuits, also, reach into it and included several incipient societies.

The numerical strength of Methodism in the several New England States, with the exception of Vermont, was at this time as follows: Province of Maine, 616; New Hampshire, 92; Massachusetts, 913; Rhode Island, 177; Connecticut, 1201. Maine had gained, during the year, 259; New Hampshire, 24; Massachusetts, 89; Rhode Island had lost 43, and Connecticut had gained 151. These details exhibit that period to us as the day of small things, but to the laborers of the time, who alone could appreciate the obstacles which opposed their progress, such results appeared most gratifying.

It was not, however, by numerical exhibits alone that they measured their success; hundreds who never united in their humble communion were recovered unto God by their instrumentality, and became, in other denominations, the first agents of that resuscitation of vital piety which has since transformed the aspect of the New England church. More thorough views of experimental religion were disseminated through the length and breadth of the eastern States, and, chiefly, the foundations were laid for a mighty agency in the future, the results of which our grateful eyes have beheld in part, and our children's children will behold, we trust, on a still ampler and sublimer scale.

# CHAPTER XXV.

## CONFERENCE AND PREACHERS OF 1797.

Second Wilbraham Conference — Good Tidings from the Circuits — Lorenzo Dow — Locations — Appointments — Preachers — David Buck — Roger Searle — Ebenezer Stevens — Joseph Crawford — Ezekiel Canfield — John Finnegan.

On the 19th of September, 1797, the New England Conference convened, a second time, in Wilbraham, Mass. Lee presided, and made the appointments for the ensuing year, in conformity with Asbury's request, and with the approbation of the preachers. We have been able to glean but few particulars respecting the session. "The business," says Lee, "was conducted to the satisfaction of the preachers, and peace and love dwelt among us." Some encouraging tidings were reported from the Circuits. The evangelists from Maine had planned a new Circuit, and extended considerably their former ones. They brought from Bath Circuit, which had been formed the preceding year, returns to the amount of thirty-one members. From Penobscot, where Enoch Mudge had labored, chiefly, (though appointed to Bath,) they reported the news of an extended revival, and an accession of thirty-seven souls. Jesse Stoneman brought word of a gain of nearly one hundred on Portland Circuit, and Brodhead reported from Readfield, his first appointment in New England, news of a glorious work of God, and an ingathering of ninety-four converts. Philip Wager, who, after having travelled as the first regularly appointed Methodist preacher in Maine, had been sent alone the past year into New Hampshire, to travel the first Circuit in that State, came back with the report of a gain of twenty-four, and of a prospect widening on all sides, for the access of other laborers. The indefatigable Joseph Mitchell had good news, also, from Granville. Under his zealous labors the word had run and been glorified, and sixty-nine members had been added to the church. Evan Rogers reported cheering tidings from Tolland. Opposition had raged, the pulpits of that region had fulminated against the new sect, but God owned them by gracious outpourings of his gracious spirit, and they had gained a nett increase of seventy-three. Woolsey had also witnessed the displays of the Spirit on Redding Circuit, where about fifty had been received. Joshua Hall had gone from Needham Circuit to Sandwich, on Cape Cod, and been instrumental of a wide-spead revival, and a new Circuit was now reported in that section, with forty-seven members.

These were signal results in the estimation of the hardworking evangelists of the time, and their hearts warmed within them at such evidences of their progress. They thanked God and took courage.

Asbury had sent to the Conference a communication, proposing the appointment of Lee and two others, (Whatcoat and Poythress,) as assistant Bishops; they declined it as being incompatible with the requirements of the Discipline,[*] but at the close of the session they gave Lee a certificate signifying their wish that he would "travel with the Bishop and fill his appointments, when the latter could not be present." * The eccentric Lorenzo Dow, a sincere lunatic, was present and repeated his application, (declined at the Thompson Conference,) for admission to the noble company of Itinerants. Their growing success, ardent zeal, and vast labors, enlisted his indomitable spirit; he felt a heroic sympathy with their cause, but they still feared his aberrations, and rejected his request. Mitchell and Bostwick plead for him till they could say no more, and sat down and wept. He was allowed to travel under the direction of the Presiding Elder, but not enrolled with the little band.† He was a right-hearted, but wrong-headed man, labored like a Hurcules, did some good and had an energy of character which with sounder faculties would have rendered him as eminent as he was noted.

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[*] Lee's Mem , chap. XIV.

The venerable Joshua Wells, who had been travelling with Asbury, was present during the session, and aided by his counsels in its deliberations.‡

Evan Rogers, George Cannon, James Covel, Elijah Woolsey and Daniel Dennis, located this year, broken down in health, or tired of the severities of an Itinerant life ; but able men — Shadrach Bostwick, Michael Coate, Peter Jane, Jayne Wm. Thatcher and others — took their places. One was expelled, — Thomas Coope — the first Methodist preacher excommunicated in New England.

The following is the list of appointments for the ensuing year : — George Pickering, *Presiding Elder; Warren* and *Greenwich*, Nathaniel Chapin and Wesley Budd ; *Boston* and *Needham*, Daniel Ostrander and Elias Hull; *Sandwich*, Joseph Snelling; *Lynn* and *Marblehead*, John Brodhead; *Martha's Vineyard*, Joshua Hall; *Chesterfield*, Smith Weeks; *Provincetown*, Jacob Rickhow; *Vershire*, Ralph Williston. Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder; Readfield*, Joshua Taylor and Robert Yallalee; *Bath*, Roger Searle; *Penobscot*, Timothy Merritt; *Portland*, Nicholas Snethen and John Finnegan; *Kennebec*, Jesse Stoneman; *Pleasant River*, Enoch Mudge; *New London*, Shadrach Bostwick and John Nichols; *Pomfret*, Stephen Hull and Joseph Crawford; *Middletown*, Michael Coate and Peter Jane Jayne; *Tolland*, Lawrence McCoombs; *Litchfield*, Ezekiel Canfield and William Thatcher; *Granville*, David Brumley and Ebenezer McLane; *Redding*, David Buck and Augustus Jocelyn; *Pittsfield*, Cyrus Stebbins and Ebenezer Stevens. The last eight Circuits were included in a New York District, under the superintendence of Sylvester Hutchinson.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Anno 1797.

† Dow's Journals, Anno 1797.

‡ Asbury's Journals, Anno 1797.

Fourteen of these laborers received their appointments in New England the present year.

David Buck was born in New Jersey, September 12th, 1771. When but eighteen years old, he was soundly converted to God. His Itinerant ministry commenced in 1794, on Delaware Circuit, N. Y., as colleague of Robert Dillon. The next three years, he labored successively on Newburg (N. Y.) and Long Island Circuits. In 1797, he entered New England, and was the colleague of Augustus Jocelyn, on Redding Circuit, Conn. We miss him in 1798. The next year he reappears in the Minutes, among the supernumeraries. He resumed effective services in 1800, at Brooklynn, N. Y. The following year he was colleague of Peter Jane and B. Hibbard, on Long Island, where, also, he continued to travel the year after, with Peter Jane and John Finnegan. He located, through bodily infirmities, in 1803, after travelling eight years. Mr. Buck was a sound and excellent preacher. He resided at Hempstead Harbor, Long Island, after his location, and continued there until the day of his death.

"Perhaps," says one who knew him, "few local preachers have labored with greater acceptance and usefulness than Brother Buck. For about twenty years he has preached almost every Sabbath, in the neighborhood of his residence, and the adjoining places, and yet few preachers could collect a larger congregation of attentive and willing hearers.

"He was an excellent and powerful preacher. At Quarterly-Meetings and Camp-Meetings, whenever he spoke, he was heard with interest and delight. God was with him — the sacred unction usually attended his word, and hundreds on Long Island have cause to bless God that they ever heard him proclaim the sound of salvation. He held the office of Circuit Steward, and other offices in the church. His instructions and admonitions were received with respect; and perhaps no person could have been taken from the Circuit where he resided, whose death would be more deeply and universally lamented.

"He suffered for about ten days the most excruciating pain; but he suffered with that fortitude, that patience, and that calm and cheerful submission, which characterize the Christian. He asked his companion one day, 'Have I been impatient?' To which she replied in the negative. About four days before his departure, a niece of his said to him, as he was sitting in a chair, 'Uncle, you feel, I trust, that heaven is your home.' 'Yes,' said he, 'if it were not for that, at such a time, I know not what I should do.' And when spoken to afterwards, concerning his departure he said, 'My conscience is pure, there is nothing that I am conscious of that I have cause to fear or dread.' These were the last words which he uttered, and about one o'clock on Friday morning, May 2d, 1823, his immortal spirit fled, we have reason to believe, to the regions of the just." *

ROGER SEARLE joined the Itinerancy in 1795, and was appointed to Bethel, N. Y. The next year, he was the colleague of Bostwick and Smith Weeks, on Cambridge Circuit, N. Y. He entered New England in 1797, and took charge of Bath Circuit, in Maine. The following year, he was appointed to Kennebec, Maine. In 1799, he returned to New York, and was sent to Duchess. He re-entered New England the next year, and was colleague of James Coleman, on

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* Methodist Magazine, 1823.

Middletown Circuit, Conn. The following two years he spent on Cambridge Circuit, but again returned to New England in 1803, and was appointed to Pittsfield, Mass. His appointment for the next year was not recorded, and in 1805 he is reported as withdrawn. Mr. Searle was a very respectable preacher, and his labors among us were extensively useful. After leaving his fellow-laborers in the Itinerancy, he entered the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal church, but like most who have made the like change, was unsuccessful and unfortunate. He sunk under a cloud and descended into the drunkard's grave.

Ebenezer Stevens commenced his Itinerant labors on Pittsfield Circuit, Mass., the present year, as colleague of Cyrus Stebbins. The following two years he spent on Litchfield and Middletown Circuits, Conn. He travelled four years more — two on Cambridge Circuit, N. Y., and two on Brandon Circuit, Vt. In 1804 and 1805, he is returned as supernumerary, and in 1806, as located. He was a choice man, habitually buoyant in spirits, bland in manners, and vivacious in conversation. Of course he could not but be universally popular. He was exceeding fertile in comparisons and figures, rendering his discourses at once interesting and comprehensible to the popular understanding. In New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont, he is affectionately remembered by many. He died in the faith.

Ezekiel Canfield was a veteran mighty in labors if not in talents, and faithful to the end. His first Circuit was Herkimer, N. Y. After spending two more years in that State, on Cambridge and New Rochelle Circuits, he came to New England, and travelled successively, Litchfield, Granville, Warren and Greenwich Circuits. In 1800, he returned to New York, and took charge of Cambridge Circuit. The next year he was on Brandon Circuit, Vt., with Ebenezer

Washburn. We miss him the following year, but in 1803–4 we trace him successively to Brooklyn and Albany. He was on the superannuated list the next year. In 1808, he re-entered the Itinerancy, and clung to its toils and sacrifices twelve years longer, preaching at New Rochelle, Croton, Courtlandt, Suffolk, Montgomery, New Windsor and Newburg Circuits, N. Y., and spending his last three years of effective service in New England, on Stratford and Goshen Circuits, Conn. He was superannuated from 1819 to 1825, "worn out by labor and affliction." *

He was the dearer to New England for being a native of her soil, having been born in Salisbury, Connecticut. He died October 16th, 1825, a good and beloved old soldier of the cross, which he honored as well by his life as by his voice. His talents were not extraordinary, but he was instant in season and out of season, traversing New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont, sounding "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," and seeking the lost souls of men.

"Our beloved brother," say his co-laborers, "was modest in his deportment, affable and cheerful in his conversation, firm in his attachments to his friends, and plain, experimental and practical in his preaching." † Though an agonized sufferer in his last sickness, he bowed his head in resignation before God, enduring, as seeing him who is invisible, and as he went down to the grave he declared that his "confidence was as unshaken as the pillars of heaven."

John Finnegan was also a heroic veteran, having done good battle in the Itinerant field, for thirty-two years. He was a quaint, eccentric, but determined Irishman, bearing the trials and toils of an Itinerant life unblenchingly, not only

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* Minutes of 1826. † Ibid.

during the novelty of a first experiment, but through the tests of a long life. He was born in the town of Caran, county of Tyrone, Ireland, May 29th, 1767, was converted to God in the twentieth year of his age, sailed for America, June 8th, 1791, and arrived at New York on the 12th of August following. He began his travels as a preacher, in 1795, and labored two years on Otsego and Newburg Circuits, N. Y. In 1797, he came to New England, and travelled successively, Portland, with Nicholas Snethen ; Penobscot, with Enoch Mudge ; Bath and Union, with Comfort and Smith ; Needham, with Nathan Emory ; and Warren and Greenwich Circuits. In 1802, he returned to New York and labored on Long Island and Brooklyn, Southold, Saratoga, Long Island again, Croton, Albany, Montgomery, Newburg, Saratoga a second time, Cambridge, Schenectady and Delaware Circuits. In 1814, he returned to New England and labored on Pittsfield Circuit, Mass., two years ; after which he was located during three years. In 1819, he was again abroad in the Itinerant work, preaching successively in Sharon, Conn., Delaware, Sullivan, Jefferson and other New York Circuits. His appointments form a significant list, illustrative at once of the energy of the man and the mutations of the Itinerant ministry.

He was reported among the "worn out" preachers in 1827, and died in 1838. His death was sudden and unexpected. Having ate his supper as usual, he retired to sleep, manifesting no unfavorable symptoms. Soon after, something was heard to fall in his chamber, and he was discovered prostrate and speechless on the floor. In a few moments he was no more. "He was a good man," say his brethren, "and feared not death.* We have no doubt, that he is now rejoicing with the saints in heaven. The Lord giveth his servants rest."† He remarked in conversation, a few days before his decease, that Christianity did not admit of the fear of death, and through grace he was enabled to rejoice in the victory.

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* Minutes of 1839.

† Ibid.

John Finnegan is well remembered in New England; he was, indeed, a man never to be forgotten by those who once knew him — a unique character — one of those original minds, whose strong peculiarities found, frequently in those days, a congeniality in the strong peculiarities of Methodism, which won them fondly to its embrace, and sanctifying even their eccentricities, inspired them with a devotion to its privations and labors, the spectacle of which is affecting to our contemplation.

# CHAPTER XXVI.

## SKETCHES OF PREACHERS.

Peter Jane — Michael Coate— Shadrach Bostwick — Joseph Snelling — Early Methodist Meetings in Boston — Methodism on Cape Cod — Anecdote of Lee — Introduction of Methodism into Sandwich, Mass. — Martha's Vineyard — House Warming at Holmes' Hole — Revival on Warren Circuit — Scenes in Maine — Methodism in Bristol, R. I. —Barnstable — Falmouth — William Thatcher.

JAYNE

Peter Jane was born in Marblehead, Mass., in 1778, and converted to God in his 16th year. He began to travel, as a preacher of the gospel, when 18 years of age, and for ten years labored with great ability and success, in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine and New York. His appointments were as follows: 1797, Middletown, Conn.; 1798, Pleasant River, Me.; 1799, Granville, Mass.; 1800, Duchess, N. Y.; 1801 and 1802, Brooklyn, N. Y.; 1803 and 1804, Lynn, Mass.; 1805 and 1806, Boston, where he died in the faith and peace of the gospel, September the 5th, 1806, at the early age of 28. His death, in the vigor of his faculties, and at the period of his greatest promise, was an occasion of universal mourning among his brethren in New England, for he was a well beloved hope of the church, a man of rare abilities and excellent qualities. His mind was capacious and critical, his information extensive, his style severe and forcible, his piety profound and uniform, and his manners were distinguished by a frankness and sincerity which marked him on all occasions. His ministry produced a strong impression. A deafness, not common to his age, interfered with the ease of his social intercourse, but he was nevertheless faithful in his pastoral duties, and did well the work of a Methodist preacher. Doubtless, had he lived, he would have been one of the luminaries of the church, shedding an excellent light over its length and breadth, as he did over the local spheres of his able ministry. We regret that the resources of our information are so inadequate to the merits of such a man.

Michael Coate was also a bright and shining light in his day — a man of precious memory, through a large extent of the church. He was born in Burlington, N. J., in 1767. His parents were Quakers, but became Methodists, and were the first in that neighborhood who welcomed the Methodist Itinerants. When quite young, his mind was frequently impressed by the Spirit of God, but these impressions were like the morning cloud and early dew, which passeth away. At last his brother, Samuel Coate, began to preach, and under his word the Divine Spirit wrought upon the mind of Michael the profoundest convictions. He was led to call upon God with tears and groans of anguish, confessing and deploring his sinfulness, and entreating the divine mercy, with a broken spirit. The light at last dawned upon his soul, the voice of God called upon him, " arise and shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." He did arise, and from that hour till his death shone brightly in the midst of our Zion. Beginning to exhort the very night that brought deliverance to his captive soul, he continued from that time, (1794,) through twenty years of incessant travels and labors, sounding abroad the word of life.

He began his Itinerant ministry in 1795, on Columbia Circuit, N. Y., where he continued two years, and then entering New England, labored two years more on Middletown Circuit, Conn. In 1798, at the solicitation of his brother Samuel, who was an evangelical pioneer in Upper Canada, he went thither as a missionary, and labored one year in what was then the remote wilderness of Niagara. Long travels, bad roads, terrible cold and storms, poor sustenance and lodging, in log cabins, through which the inclement weather played upon his bed, were among the concomitants of the Itinerant's life in Canada at that day; but there were reliefs, also. The power of God accompanied his word. Great and wonderful revivals followed the labors of Woorster, Dunham, and the two Coates, and the foundations of an extensive series of churches were laid by their self-sacrificing toils.

In 1799, he was ordained Elder, and appointed to the city of New York; 1800, Pittsfield and Whitingham, in Mass.; 1801, New York city; 1802, New London Circuit, Conn.; 1803–4, New York city; 1805–6, Philadelphia; 1807–8, Baltimore; 1809, Philadelphia; 1810, Burlington Circuit; 1811–12–13–14, he was Presiding Elder of the West Jersey District.

"He was a man of great talents," says a good authority,* "a solid, amiable, and fine looking man." His co-laborers say:

> He possessed a strong mind and sound judgment; was much devoted to God, serious, weighty and solemn in all his carriage. Nothing

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* Bishop Hedding to the Writer.

was more manifest in his character than his meekness and lowliness. In the various important stations which he filled, he ever manifested the same humility of mind; no air of self-importance appeared in any part of his deportment. As a Christian minister, he was lively, zealous, and energetic; he appeared always to have had a deep sense of the infinite value of immortal souls, which led him to use his utmost exertion to save them from the wrath to come. He was an excellent experimental and practical preacher, and as such, was very useful. With the utmost propriety it may be said of him, that 'his praise was in all the churches.'

At the first quarterly-meeting for Burlington Circuit, in 1814, held in the city of Burlington, he preached on the Sabbath with great animation, acceptability and usefulness, to a large concourse of people, on the subject of eternal glory. He chose for his text Rev. 7: 9: 'After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.' While preaching, he was favored with a pleasing prospect of that glory, and seemed to anticipate the joys of eternity. This was the last time he preached.

On the ensuing Monday he was taken ill, and continued so until the Lord said, 'It is enough; come up hither;' which was about five weeks from his first illness. His affliction was extremely severe; but he patiently suffered the will of God in his sickness, as he had cheerfully done it in his health; yet he observed to some of his friends, that it is easier to do than to suffer the will of God. In the commencement of his illness, Satan thrust sore at him, and his conflict was inexpressibly great; under these severe exercises he mentioned the twenty-third chapter of Job, a portion of Scripture admirably suited to his case, which he requested to be read to him, and during the reading of which, the power of God filled the place, and his soul was abundantly comforted. Some time after this, in a storm of rain at night, while the thunders were roaring in the heaven above, and vivid lightnings flashed most awfully, his soul was filled with rapture, and he shouted aloud the praises of God, declaring that the peals of thunder sounded sweeter than the most melodious music. Subsequently, his soul was more tranquil; he viewed death, in its solemn approach, with the utmost composure, and, with the great apostle, knew that 'he had fought a good fight, had finished his course, had kept the faith, and that henceforth there was laid up a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him.' On the first day of August, 1814, he took his exit to a world of spirits.

He has left a fragrant memory in the church, and many an aged saint who has been profitted by his able labors, brightens in countenance at the mention of the name of the devoted Michael Coate.

SHADRACH BOSTWICK was also one of "God's noblemen," a prince and a great man in our Israel. Like many of the great men of Methodism, he was a native of Maryland. Commencing his Itinerant ministry in 1791, he travelled extensive Circuits during fourteen years, in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Ohio. His first appointment was to Milford Circuit, Del. In 1792, he was the colleague of Evan Rogers, on Talbot Circuit, Md. The three following years he spent in New Jersey, on Bethel, Flanders and Elizabethtown Circuits. In 1796, he passed to New York, and was colleague to Smith Weeks and Roger Searle, on Cambridge and Saratoga Circuits. He came to New England in 1797, and travelled New London Circuit with John Nichols. The next year he took charge of the New London District, where he continued two years, directing a host of powerful men, among whom were Lawrence McCoombs, Daniel Ostrander, Asa Heath, Joseph Crawford, William Thatcher, &c. The three following years he superintended the Pittsfield District, with Henry Ryan, Peter Vannest, Michael Coate, Joseph Mitchell, James Coleman, Laban Clark, Elijah Hedding, and other strong men, under him. In 1803, he passed to the Western Reserve, then a remote settlement on the western frontier. There he labored as a missionary, on Deerfield Circuit, then within the Pittsburg District of the Baltimore Conference. He was the first Methodist preacher sent into that wilderness region, and formed the Circuit. It extended among the sparse villages, and required extraordinary labors and sacrifices. He travelled on the Indian trails and by marks on the trees. The roads were so bad in winter and the bridges so few, that he had to desist from travelling for several months during the worst weather. He formed the first Methodist societies in that fine country, and the results of his labors during this, and the following year, have continued to multiply to the present time, "keeping an even pace with the progress of the settlements, and the improvement of society." * He located on account of domestic circumstances, in 1805, and resumed the practice of medicine to which he had been educated.

"Shadrach Bostwick," says one of his old friends and fellow-laborers, "was a glorious man." † He was a consummate preacher, famous through all the extensive regions of his labors, for the intellectual and evangelical power of his sermons; hundreds will rise up and call him blessed, in the final day. His talents would have secured him eminence in any department of public life. His discourses were systematic, profound, luminous, and often overwhelming, his piety deep and pure, his manners dignified and amiable.

JOSEPH SNELLING was a native of Boston, where he was converted under the labors of Ezekiel Cooper, and became one of the earliest members of the struggling Methodist society in that city.

One Sabbath evening he heard that there was to be a Methodist meeting in a private house. Preaching in private houses was to him a novel thing, and to satisfy his curiosty, he determined to attend. He asked some of his companions to go with him. They readily complied with his request, and went, expecting to have considerable sport on the occasion. When he entered the house, his mind was light and trifling, and he felt much prejudice against them; but when he heard the solemn tone of the preacher, and saw solemnity upon the countenances of the hearers, he was struck with a degree of seriousness that he never felt before. There were but eighteen or twenty persons present. Ezekiel Cooper was preaching.

After this, he had a great desire to attend again,

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* Bangs' History of Methodism, vol. II., p. 80. † Bishop Hedding.

and went the next Sabbath. The meeting was in a chamber, which was crowded. "Mr. Cooper gave out the hymn, giving two lines at a time, so that any of the congregation who had not a book, might join in the singing. His text was from I. Thes. 5: 19: 'Quench not the Spirit,' He spoke of the properties of fire — that it is warming, enlightening, and purifying — and applied it to the spirit in a clear manner."

He mentioned many ways the Spirit might be quenched, and described Mr. Snelling's feelings so plainly, that it seemed as if some one had told the preacher of his case. He endeavored to suppress his feelings, but found it was in vain. He then felt determined to seek an interest in Christ — to forsake the vanities of the world and devote himself to the service of God.

"I was delighted," he says, "with the manner, as well as matter of Mr. Cooper's preaching. I thought, indeed, he was like Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. I now attended all the meetings, felt willing to give up the company of my former thoughtless associates, and every hindrance in my way, and was resolved to seek the Lord with my whole heart. My mind was constantly in a praying frame. Often, when there was no meeting, would I go, in the evening to a place, at the end of the Common, now called Beacon Hill, which was a retired place, and there, free from interruption, spend many an hour alone, in meditation and prayer.* The world, with all it could give, was then as nothing, in my esteem. I had no desire to go to the theatre or any of those places of amusements which I formerly loved. I continued to seek the Lord in all the means of grace, but it was some time before I found peace in believing. This took place, I think, in a prayer-meeting. While contemplating the sufferings and death of our blessed Redeemer, my heart was melted into tenderness, and I was brought to give up all for Christ, who was indeed, to my soul, 'the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.' I felt that the Lord Jesus Christ had power on earth to forgive sins, and I rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I now felt willing to cast in my lot with the people of God, and immediately joined the society, much to the dissatisfaction of some of my friends. This was in the summer of 1793."

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* In the street, now called Beacon street, there were at that time but three houses. These were Governor Hancock's, Deacon Nye's, and Master Vinal's, so called.

Mr. Snelling has the honor of being the first preacher sent forth by the Boston Methodists. On being licensed to exhort, he went to Cape Cod, and labored at Truro and other places, successively. "In Truro," he says, "as they had no meeting-house, we held our meetings in private houses. Here the Lord poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner; many souls were brought from darkness to light, and praised God for redeeming grace. This was the greatest work I had ever witnessed."

After receiving license as a local preacher, he labored some time at Provincetown. "Many precious souls," he says, "were brought from darkness to light. I preached on the Sabbath, a part of the time in Truro. There, also, the congregations were large, and the word ran and was glorified. Brother Lee was Presiding Elder. It was his request that I should be removed from Provincetown to Rhode Island, and another take my place. He brought a young man with him for that purpose, and I was exchanged."

He was now (1796) removed to Warren Circuit, where he assisted Daniel Ostrander.

> "We preached," he says, "nearly every day in the week, besides attending prayer-meetings and meeting the classes. It took us six weeks to go round the Circuit. There was some revival of religion on the Circuit. Brother Lee, being our Presiding Elder, attended all the quarterly-meetings. He attended one in a certain place where the people neglected to give the preacher any refreshment at noon, on the Sabbath. We told Brother Lee of this, and on Sabbath afternoon he preached from Acts 24: 25: 'And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' When speaking on temperance, he observed, 'If we see a person asleep in the afternoon, under preaching, it is a sign of intemperance; perhaps the person has eat too much dinner; but we have no reason to fear such a thing in this place, for I have eat no dinner to-day.'"

He attended the Wilbraham Conference in 1797, and was appointed, as we have noted, to Sandwich.

"Before Methodism was introduced into Sandwich," he remarks, "there was a man there who formerly resided in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This gentleman became acquainted with the Methodists in that place, and experienced religion through their instrumentality. He, being desirous to have preaching of that order in Sandwich, informed the people respecting the doctrines, &c., of Methodism, and requested them to take measures to have a preacher sent them. This gentleman was chosen as an agent, and immediately went to Boston, and applied for one. I happened to be in Boston at the time, and recollect the manner in which he introduced the subject. 'We have a little sister and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.' * While I was in Sandwich, I had two appointments for preaching on the Sabbath, which were six miles apart; these I fulfilled in each place every other Sabbath. I preached half the time in the Congregational meeting-house, which was well filled with hearers; and our prayer-meetings and class-meetings were lively and powerful. Some, I trust, were made partakers of divine grace. I tarried in this place about six months; I hope not altogether in vain.

He spent the remainder of the ecclesiastical year on Needham Circuit, which was large and laborious. While there, he dedicated the Old Methodist Chapel of Needham. Thence he passed to Martha's Vineyard in 1798 — the second Methodist preacher appointed there. He preached at Holmes' Hole, Middletown and Chilmark.

"The young people at Holmes' Hole," he remarks, "were very fond of the amusement of dancing. They sometimes had what was called a house-warming, i. e. when a house was built, the owner, on his first moving into it gave a ball. While I was there a gentleman built a new house, and gave out word that he should have a house-warming. He gave a general invitation to all the young people to attend; 'but,' said he, 'Mr. Snelling must be the fiddler.' By his request I preached at his house at the time appointed for the house-warming, to a crowded assembly. The young people being disappointed, were determined not to be defeated, and appointed a ball soon after. Not long before the day appointed for the ball, a gentleman saw a young lady who was expecting to attend, and asked her which she should prefer seeing, Mr. Snelling with his Bible, or the fiddler with his fiddle. She said she should prefer seeing the fiddler. The evening previous to the contemplated ball I preached in the neighborhood, and the young lady attended; she was awakened, and soon after was made a partaker of divine

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* Song of Solomon, 8 : 8, 9.

grace. After the meeting, the same gentleman saw her again and said to her, 'I wish to ask you the same question I did the other day. Which would you *now* prefer seeing, Mr. Snelling with his Bible, or the fiddler with his fiddle?' 'O,' said she with tears, 'I should rather see Mr. Snelling; what I once called innocent amusement, and so much delighted in, I have no desire for now; I freely renounce all these vanities, and lament that I have spent so much of my precious time in this worse than useless manner.' This young lady was not the only one that was awakened at this meeting. The greater part of the young people were present — the power of God attended the word, and many were awakened; there was weeping on every hand; several were so much distressed in mind that they were unwilling to leave the place, and we were obliged to continue our meeting till a late hour. The ball was given up, and a glorious reformation followed. To the great and merciful God be all the glory."

The next year he was appointed to Provincetown, but was sent by the Presiding Elder, George Pickering, to Truro, to adjust some discords which had crept into the young society there.

"I preached," he observes, "in Provincetown, Truro, Wellfleet, Harwich and Chatham. I had preached to some of these people about two years before, when that friendship was established between us that is not easily broken. They now received me with every mark of affection, and here I felt perfectly at home. The church was well engaged, and walked in the light and comfort of the Holy Spirit. The young converts, also, were faithful in the discharge of their duty, and, like Gideon's soldiers, they broke their pitchers and showed their lamps. The Lord was with us and blessed us in our meetings, which were powerful and profitable. At the time there was but one other preacher of the Methodist order stationed on the Cape.

In 1800, he attended the Boston Conference, and was sent, with Solomon Langdon, to Warren Circuit.

"This Circuit was very large," he remarks; "it contained about twenty different places within its bounds. In several places the Lord poured out his spirit upon the people in a wonderful manner. My colleague was a very amiable young man, who labored faithfully in the Lord's vineyard. We formed a society in Cumberland, and a blessed reformation commenced there. A goodly number in this place experienced religion and joined the society. There was a reformation, also, in Easton and Bridgewater. We had a meeting one evening at Easton, where the power of God was manifested in the conversion of souls, in a most remarkable manner. The house, which was large, was full to overflowing, and in every part of it might be heard some praying for mercy, and others praising God for redeeming grace. We continued our meeting till three o'clock in the morning. The congregational minister of Easton was present. The reformation continued in different directions, and Zion's converts were multiplied."

In 1801, he was appointed again to Needham Circuit.

"I was alone," he says, "where two preachers had labored the year before. It was a four weeks' Circuit, and with preaching class-meetings, prayer-meetings, visiting, &c., I had work enough. I preached on the Sabbath in four different places, alternately; the meetings were well attended, and I hope not altogether in vain. While I was on Needham Circuit, I formed two societies, one in Weston, the other in Harvard. The societies, in general, were prosperous, and I felt very much attached to the people.

The next year he was removed to Maine and labored on Readfield Circuit, where he continued two years. It was a four weeks' Circuit, requiring labor in the pulpit, in prayer-meetings, and class-meetings, almost daily. Joshua Taylor, the Presiding Elder, sent him around Norridgewock Circuit, to administer the ordinances.

"This," he remarks "was a new Circuit, and a very laborious one; but notwithstanding, it was pleasant to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. In going round Norridgewock Circuit, I found great difficulty in travelling, in consequence of the great depth of snow then on the ground. I visited a place at the extreme part of the Circuit, which was not incorporated. A man, who was acquainted with the way, guided me through the wilderness in a narrow path, scarcely wide enough to walk in. He told me that he accompanied David Sand, a Friend preacher, through the same path. It was indeed, a dreary way, and I was glad to reach the place appointed for the meeting. This was a small log hut, with the roof covered with bark; it was the last house in the settlement, and remote from any other. Here I passed the night; it was extremely cold, and, in order to get to my bed, I had to climb a small ladder; this I had done before, and slept where I could view the stars through the openings in the roof, and sometimes in the morning have found my bed covered with snow Notwithstanding these inconveniences, I found a very intelligent and agreeable family. The gentleman had a liberal education, and held a Colonel's commission. His lady was very accomplished, could converse freely on almost every subject, and was well acquainted with the writings of some of the most popular authors. They had seen better days, but yet were contented and happy, though living in this small secluded way.

"After attending all the appointments round Norridgewock Circuit, and administering the ordinances, I returned to Readfield."

In 1804, Mr. Snelling was again appointed to Sandwich Circuit, and in 1805 was stationed at Bristol, R. I., and Somerset, Massachusetts, preaching on alternate Sabbaths in each. The feeble society in the former, worshipped in the court-house.

"I preached," he says, "three times on the Sabbath, and had meetings of some kind nearly every evening in the week. These meetings were attended with a blessing, and many gladly accepted salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The congregation continued to increase till the court-house was so crowded, that our friends thought it necessary to build a meeting-house. Accordingly, a large and commodious house was built, and I preached the dedication sermon, from Matt. 11: 42: 'The stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner.' The work of the Lord went on in a remarkable manner; the church was looking forth fair as the morning, and attention to religion prevailed. I preached part of the time in Somerset. They built a new meeting-house, and I preached the first sermon in that, also.

"The next year I was again in Bristol and Somerset, and towards the close of it, a blessed reformation commenced again in Bristol; in the midst of it I very reluctantly took my leave of them, and went to Conference, which was then in Boston, in the year 1807. My station now was Warren and Bristol, it before was called Bristol and Somerset. I preached very little in Warren, as there was a local preacher living there, but spent my time chiefly at Bristol. Preaching and holding meetings every night, so affected my health, that I became very feeble; but, notwithstanding my strength was sometimes almost exhausted, I ever considered it a privilege to labor in the Lord's vineyard, and in his strength was enabled to go forward in my duty. In Bristol we had an excellent choir of singers; it was thought to be the best on Boston District. The gallery, which was in circular form, was well filled with singers, and the greater part of them professed religion. The gifts in the church, also, were as great as in any place that I ever preached in. Several of our brethren were masters of vessels; these would exhort and pray and comment on the Scriptures, in a remarkable manner. During my labors in Bristol the Lord added to the church a goodly number, and I hope to meet them where they that sow and they that reap shall rejoice together."

In 1808, he was sent again to Sandwich. Here he was informed that a a few were making efforts to introduce Methodism into Barnstable, but under circumstances of great opposition and trial.

> A gentleman, he says, residing there, desiring to have preaching, had fitted up a hall for that purpose, but, finding so much opposition, was about giving it up through fear of persecutors. We had a quarterly meeting at Sandwich, and this gentleman and another from Barnstable, attended. Being anxious for their prosperity, and wishing to see how things went on, I concluded to make them a visit. I therefore informed Mr. Hinckley of my intention, and requested him, when he returned to Barnstable, to make an appointment for me to preach in the evening. He told me his house was open and free for preaching, but he feared the consequences on my account, thinking I should be ill-treated.* I told him that I would venture that, and should be glad to go. Accordingly he appointed a meeting, and I fulfilled the appointment. The house was very large and filled to overflowing. After singing and prayer, I commenced my sermon, from Matt. 22 : 42: "What think ye of Christ?" I closed my sermon, and went through every exercise of the meeting, and could not wish a more attentive and respectful congregation.

Mr. Snelling continued in Sandwich two years, during which he extended his labors over many parts of Cape Cod, and was instrumental in founding several new societies, including that of Falmouth. In 1810, he located; subsequently entered the ministry of the Protestant Methodist church, and now, in a green and devoted old age, resides at Methuen, Mass. He has been characterized by moderate, but good talents, hearty and successful zeal, a temper full of sweetness, and manners of an endearing amiability. All who have known him have loved him, and we doubt not he will be hailed by many in heaven, who were led by his instrumentality to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. We have given him an ampler space in these notices than is occupied by many others, not because the latter were not equally worthy, but because the sources of information respecting them are slight, while the records of his travels abound in interesting illustrations of the growth of our cause. It is not only the design, but the necessity of this work, to illustrate the history of Methodism by such personal memorials. In the narrative we have given of this venerable man, we have many interesting glimpses of its progress in Cape Cod, and in Rhode Island and Maine.

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* They had prepared to tar and feather one preacher.

William Thatcher was born in 1769, in the town of Norwalk, Conn. "I was born again," he writes, "on the 19th of June, 1790, in Baltimore, Md.; I then joined the Methodist Episcopal church. My conversion was not a *hope obtained*, but a thorough work of grace, a bright witness of pardon, an overflowing love of God, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, given unto me, about 9 o'clock that morning. Since then, a lapse of nearly 67 years, I have never lost my adoption into the family of God." *

Mr. Thatcher was early impressed with the importance of personal holiness. He gives the following account of his experience of sanctification.

> In the spring of 1793, I resided in Petersburgh, in Virginia; I was conversant with some pious young men; much conversation was had on the subject of sanctification, and prayer for that blessing. Our views were not clear on it, yet we felt that it was our privilege, and believed that God would answer prayer for it. My usual times of private prayer, were bedtime, morning and sunset. Having the charge of a store, and being the only religious person in the family, on closing the store at dusk, my custom was, to lock myself in and pray privately. At one of these seasons of retirement, as soon as the door was fastened, suddenly such a sense of inward corruption took possession of my heart, as brought me to the floor on my face, merely from self-abhorrence; no consciousness of guilt, or doubt of my state of justification, was the cause of my mental anguish; but such a view of the evils of my heart, as was never before shown me. I rolled upon the floor in deep distress, losing sight of every thing but the pollution of my heart, which had been unknown to me since the day of my conversion; but now divine light was let into my soul, such as I had never received before: the badness of my unsanctified heart

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* Letter to the Writer.

was now felt by me, and had any one said that in five minutes all this evil would be gone, I might have said, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven might this thing be." Yet such was the fact; I rose from my prostration on my knees and began to pray, and this text was applied — "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" My next thought was, "If washing in Jordan, at the command of the prophet, would cleanse Naaman, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge my conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" O what a view of the fullness of Christ I then had! The all-sufficiency of the infinite merits of our Savior was then spread before me; my soul was all imprisoned by his love; my unbelief gave way; faith grasped the prize! The witness of full sanctification was given, O astonishing love Divine! Redeeming love! Glory be to God, I now know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder love and praise! Humbled in the dust, my heart could say, "To me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given." "God was all in all to me, and all my soul was love." Experience now shows that sanctification was not, as I had before imagined; such high transport of spiritual joys as are sometimes felt in a justified state, but my peace was "like an even spun thread." It was a reduction to the deepest self-abasement, joined with a peaceful flow of joy in the Lord. What contrast to the state of my soul a few minutes before! when such a load of inbred corruption weighed down my spirit; but now, all was peace within; such is the fruit of simple faith in Jesus, for the application of his cleansing blood.

He began to preach in the city of New Haven, in 1795. His family formed the nucleus of the Methodist church in that city. Some interesting facts of his domestic history will be given in our sketch of that society. He steadily persevered, as a local preacher, for two years; and in September, 1797, was admitted into the New York Conference. Bishop Asbury ordained him Deacon in June, 1799. Bishop Whatcoat ordained him Elder in June, 1801. His first Circuit was that of Litchfield, Conn., the members on which then numbered 230; he labored very successfully among them, travelling about 300 miles in four weeks. His colleague was Rev. E. Canfield.

So closely, he writes, was my time employed, that it was about 12 weeks from the time that I took the Circuit before I could visit my wife and little son, whom I had left at the house of her father, in New Haven, and the last quarter of this same "Conference year," (as Itinerancy was our glory,) my good Presiding Elder changed my field of labor to Pittsfield Circuit, in Massachusetts and Vermont; and I was another 12 weeks from my dear family. This Circuit had then 250 members. God was with me there and the quarter was spent happily. In 1798, I was stationed on Redding Circuit, in Fairfield County, Conn., — alone on a 4 weeks Circuit 150 miles round, and 24 appointments. I soon made it a two weeks Circuit, preaching 24 times a fortnight, and then crossed the Housatonic River, on a visit home to New Haven, 15 miles east, on Saturday and early on Sabbath morning, started for my Sabbath forenoon-appointment, 20 miles from my home; then I was at home once a fortnight, after preaching 24 sermons in two weeks and riding 180 miles. This was my regular work for the nine months of my service on Redding Circuit; the time of Conference that year was changed from September to June.

In 1799, he was stationed on Pomfret Circuit, which was partly in Connecticut, partly in Massachusetts, and partly in the north part of the State of Rhode Island, and contained but 160 members. In this field he had the happiness of witnessing a good revival, especially at Eastford, Thompson, Ware and Bloomfield, where he formed a new class of 7 members, which soon grew to 12 members. Asa Kent, Isaac Bonney, David and Joshua Crowell, preachers who afterwards entered the travelling connection, were all the fruits of this revival.

In the year 1820, writes Mr. Thatcher, I was stationed in New Haven, my only appointment in New England, except Middletown, from 1799 till 1820; mine was like Jacob's absence from home while in Padan Aram. Here I found that a site had been voted by the citizens of New Haven for the Methodists to build on, at the north corner of the central public square of the city, right in the face of Yale College. What! A noble brick building rise for the Methodists directly in front of that great establishment? As sure as such a thing is attempted, the students by night will demolish, as fast as the builders by day can erect it. Try this enterprise, Methodists, if you dare! Yes they dare. They came together in the name of the Lord, and they resolved to build Him a house, for they knew that He was with them. Their subscription is opened, a brother heads it with $500, another follows with $300, $200 follows that, and then others with hundreds each, &c., astonishing their neighbors! who said, "How is this?" My answer was, "Dont your know that the Methodists hold to works? "These are some of their works!" We must now make our strongest effort, as we shall be associated with two Congregational buildings, one Episcopalian, and a contemplated elegant State House; we would not betray the confidence of those who voted us the site, so honorable, in the centre of the most elegant city in the State. The corner stone was laid on 15th day of May, 1821. The Pastor, and a thousand others face a noble choir, echoing, for the first time there, the praises of the Most High — prophetic of the sound of that gospel which in that place should be blessed to the conversion of multitudes to Christ. The preacher wept: — the hymn was sung, the text named, and a foundation sermon preached. The builders proceeded by day, and the *un*-builders (students) proceeded by night! A night-guard soon defeated *them*, the house rose, the roof "*capt the climax:*" but on the 3d of September, of *boisterous* memory, our noble house was a shapeless mass of ruins.* Here was a trial of even *Methodist faith!* Did we quail? No! On the 24th of November, that house, enclosed, looked clear as the morning, and (to some) terrible as an army with banners. This was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes! How easily can the Lord cast down, and then build up; glory be to his holy name. Could that temple have spoken, in the day of her calamity, would it not have quoted the Prophet Micah, 7: 8: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I *fall* I shall *arise;* when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me!" Yes, in less than nine months from the night of its catastrophe; the voice of praise, prayer, and preaching by Rev. J. Summerfield, and an overflowing audience, told the story of its triumph! Here I witnessed the prosperity of the work of the Lord; the membership numbered nearly 500.

His subsequent appointments, down to 1840, were as follows: Philadelphia, Newark, N. J., Trenton, N. J., Philadelphia District, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., New Haven, Conn., Newburg, Hudson, Flushing, Williamsburg, N. Y.

In 1840, I was stationed, writes Mr. Thatcher, in my native town, Norwalk in Connecticut, a good congregation, the communicants 180. I was now over three score and ten years of age; and being an old man, I could not expect to meet with a pleased people, yet truly my reception among them was kind, and I soon found myself at home with them; this was one of the 24 appointments of Redding Circuit, when in 1798 I travelled it. Then my church was a school-house, now it was a respectable Methodist meeting-house. I labored with and for this people faithfully, and they in turn used me very kindly, but alas! I saw but very little fruit of my labor; the public excitement hurt us, and the "Old man" was off at the end of one Conference year, and more agreeably stationed in 1841–2, in Woodbury, a town in Litchfield county, in the same State. Here God favored me with a revival, 35 souls joined as the fruit of it. I found 106 in membership, and at the close of that year returned 140. My second year was not as successful as the first; the error of Millerism was the Devil's instrument to hurt our harmony and prevent a revival: and as I could not sympathize with *ultra*-Abolitionism nor Millerism, so I was left to mourn before God their effects on the peace of the church, the first in Norwalk, and then in Woodbury.

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* Prostrated by a remarkable tempest.

He was afterward appointed to Milan and Pleasant Valley, N. Y., in 1843, and Duchess, N. Y., in 1844–5. In 1846 he was superannuated, after an Itinerant ministry of half a century, lacking one year. He resides at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in a happy and sanctified old age, beloved by all who know him, and shedding around the sphere of his retirement the bright and genial influence of a remarkably cheerful temper and joyous piety. During his long and laborious life he has been able, by rigorously economizing his time, to acquire extensive general knowledge and considerable proficiency in the original languages and exegesis of the Scriptures. His pulpit exercises have always been lively, instructive and impressive. The great doctrine of Christian sanctification has been his favorite theme. He has done good service to the church, and many redeemed souls, saved through his instrumentality, wait to welcome him to the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

# CHAPTER XXVII.

## TRAVELS OF ASBURY AND LEE IN 1798.

Asbury and Lee return to New England — Hadam — New London — Norwich — Cranston — Warren — John Hill — Waltham — New Hampshire — Maine — Success of the Year — Increasing vigor of Methodism — Revivals — Returns of Members.

IMMEDIATELY after the conclusion of the Wilbraham Conference, Lee, agreeably to the vote of that body and the request of Asbury, hastened to New Rochelle, N. Y., where the Bishop was awaiting him. Thence they journeyed southward through all the Atlantic States as far as Georgia, visiting the churches and attending Conferences, Lee bearing the burden of business in the latter, and preaching throughout the route, that he might relieve his enfeebled friend.

He returned to New York, laboring night and day on the way, and on the 9th of July, 1798, left that city again for New England. On his route, Asbury and Joshua Wells overtook him. They tarried together over night, at New Rochelle, Asbury being still quite unwell. On the 13th they entered Connecticut, and by the 17th were at Hadam.

" We came," says Asbury, " safe to Father Wilcox's, where we had many tokens of love shown us, to make rest comfortable. Thursday 19th. At four o'clock, brother Lee gave a warm, encouraging sermon from I. Cor., 15 : 58. At the new meeting-house, (properly West-Hadam,) where the Methodists are upon free principles, I added a few words; and then began our march to New-London."

They reached the latter place the same night. "We put up," says Lee, "at brother Gale's. He informed us that they had just been raising the frame of a Methodist meeting-house, that afternoon, in New-London. I hope this will be profitable to the souls of the people, in some future day, and that the society here will prosper more than ever.

They tarried in the city several days. Asbury preached twice on Sunday, in the court-house. "I was greatly assisted," he says, "in mind and body." On Monday, Lee preached and laid the foundation stone of the meeting-house which the brethren of New London had been endeavoring to provide through many and most discouraging difficulties. Having comforted the feeble church they passed on to Norwich, where Asbury observes, "there is a growth of religion on this Circuit, but it is like ploughing among rocks and stone walls." The society came together to receive them. Lee and the Bishop delivered exhortations, after which, "we had," says Asbury, "a speaking and living time among the brethren and sisters." On Tuesday 24th, they were at Canterbury where they found "the life of religion among the people." The next day they reached Gen. Lippett's, at Cranston, R. I., late in the evening, and were received to the bountiful hospitality of his family. They tarried here four days, preaching to and counselling the young church, which had been formed in the neighborhood. They were at Warren, on Monday, entertained by Martin Luther — a name precious in the history of Methodism in that town. Asbury was afflicted to find here John Hill, once a laborious Itinerant in Delaware, and afterwards in New England, but now withdrawn from the communion of his brethren. "Who," he exclaims, "would have thought this once?"

Mr. Hill entered the congregational ministry, as we have elsewhere noticed, became dejected and died by his own hand.

Tuesday, 31st, continues the Bishop, we came upon Rhode Island; stopped at Matthew Cook's, dined, and then came to our little meeting-house, and had a good season on Heb. 10:38, 39. Rhode-Island is by far the most beautiful island I have seen. I have been very low, and weak and feverish of late: I can hardly write, think, read, preach, ride, or talk to purpose. It is a little trying to be with people who are healthy, active, and talkative, when you cannot bear a cheerful part with them.

Thursday, August 2d. I returned to the north-east end of the Island, where we have a small meeting-house, and some gracious souls.

Friday, 3d. We preached at Bristol; my subject was Luke 18: 7. It was to me a serious, comfortable time: what but the mighty power of God and the increasing cries of his people can help us here?

Sunday, 5th. We came to Easton; here we have a new house built. I felt exceedingly weak after riding ten miles; the evening was very warm; I however gave them a discourse on II. Tim., 2: 19, and passed the night in some bodily distress.

Tuesday, 7th. I rode twenty-two miles through heat and hunger to Boston: here I spent one night, very unwell in body, and with pains and pleasures of mind, upon account of the preachers and people.

A malignant fever was prevailing in Boston, and as his health was much enfeebled, he was advised to retire to the home of Pickering, at Waltham. He went thither on Wednesday the 8th, and exclaims, amidst its beauty and bounty, "O! a solitary house and social family; a comfortable table, pure air, and good water are blessings at Waltham." He continued there several days.

On Monday he departed for Maine. On his route he was grieved again to learn that another was retreating from the Itinerant legion, tired of its hard conflicts. Elias Hull, he tells us, was negociating an arrangement with a

Congregational church for a comfortable settlement. Mr. Hull succeeded in the negotiation, but he too changed for the worse, and was subsequently expelled from his church — a drunkard: sad lesson, too little remembered in our day, by the many who, for unjustifiable reasons, disturb the church, and bring the reproach of fickleness and avarice on themselves by recreance to vows solemnly plighted to their brethren.

On Saturday, 18th, they rode to Presumscut River, in Maine, and "stopped at Father Baker's. Sabbath day," says Asbury, "I preached in the barn on 'Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.' Here we have the frame of a good meeting-house erected upon a beautiful spot." On the 22d they reached Monmouth.

> Thursday, 23d. I was at home, says Asbury, at Brother Fogg's he and his wife are pious souls; such, with an increase, may they live and die! I had taken cold in crossing the mountain, which was rocky and uneven. I preached in the open meeting-house to a congregation of people that heard and felt the word. My subject was Eph. 6: 13-18. I was raised a small degree above my feeble self, and so were some of my hearers. We rode that evening to Hopkin's, in Winthrop,where meeting was appointed in the Congregational house: as the day was damp, and myself sick, I declined; and brother Lee preached, and the people said it was a good time.
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> Saturday, 25th. We had to beat through the woods between Winthrop and Readfield, which are as bad as the Alleghany mountains, and the shades of death. We have now laid by our carriage and saddle, to wait until Wednesday next for Conference — the first of the kind ever held in these parts, and it will probably draw the people from far and near.

Thus ended the ecclesiastical year 1797–8. It had been the most prosperous one recorded thus far in the history of Methodism, in New England. Wide spread revivals had prevailed, and the struggling cause had every where advanced — augmenting its membership by more than one third. The Circuits were not increased much in number, but greatly extended, especially in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, the former of which, though it had hitherto yielded no returns, now reported a considerable membership. Many new societies had been organized in all the New England States, several chapels erected, and a large band of local preachers formed and brought into effective co-operation with the travelling ministry. The plans which had hitherto been incipient, now began to develope their power and results. There was a growing consciousness of stability and vigor, in the new communion, of no small importance to its efficiency; and the doctrines of Methodism — so liberal and yet so vital — began to be more generally approved, except by those who were officially interested in the maintenance of the theology which had hitherto prevailed.

The truth had prevailed victoriously among the new settlements in the wilderness of the Penobscot. The people welcomed the joyful sound, scores were awakened and converted, and more than a hundred and fifty received into the church. The divine flame had also spread along the banks of the Kennebec, and many had been turned from darkness to light. Great multitudes had been awakened and converted on Cape Cod; and in Connecticut, especially, the excitement extended as fire in stubble; Middletown, New London, Tolland, Redding and Litchfield Circuits had made rapid advances, not only in numbers but in personal holiness, and in the provision of chapels.

The quaint and interesting Hibbard, had been called out during the year from the local ministry, to assist the preachers on Pittsfield and Litchfield Circuits. He has left us an account of the revivals there, in which he says:

> I think more than one hundred were awakened on these two Circuits. But some joined the Presbyterians, and some the Baptists, and some the Methodists. The work of God in convicting and converting, and sanctifying souls, was very evident. Perse-

cution raged some on Litchfield Circuit. The work of God was manifested in power, — sometimes they fell as one shot down in battle, and would lay without strength from half an hour to two hours, when they would arise happy in God. Our Presbyterian brethren and others, were afraid it was a delusion. And a revival of religion, having those extraordinary signs attending it, was highly necessary to confound dead formality. Some conversions were extraordinary. In one place I preached in a private house, where the man and his wife and one neighbor, made all the congregation. The man and his wife professed religion, but their neighbor did not. However, before I came again in four weeks, that person was converted, and had reported around by what means this work was wrought; so that thereby many others came out, and I had about seventy to preach to, instead of three ; and before long, many could testify that God for Christ's sake, had made that preaching, which some call foolishness, the happy power of salvation to their souls.

The returns of members amounted to 4155, a gain of 1216. They were distributed as follows :

Connecticut, 1455 ; Rhode Island, 162 ; Massachusetts, 1194 ; Maine, 936 ; New Hampshire, 122 ; Vermont, 286. Connecticut had gained 254 ; Rhode Island had lost 15, Massachusetts had gained 281 ; Maine, 320 ; New Hampshire, 30 ; Vermont, (which had made no previous returns,) 286. The aggregate increase of Methodists in New England this year, was more than three times as great as that of all the rest of the church throughout the republic and Canada. The Local Preachers scattered among the societies, amounted about this time to 25, at least.* With such results the laborious Itinerants wended their way from their scattered posts, with grateful hearts and good courage, to their Conferences at Readfield and Granville, in order to plan the work of another year.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Anno 1798.

# CHAPTER XXVIII.

## CONFERENCES OF 1798.

First Methodist Conference in Maine — Interest of the occasion — Reports from the Circuits — Sabbath Services — Asbury's Sermon — Lee's Discourse and Reflections — Asbury at Portland — Lynn — Waltham — Weston — Conference at Granville — Cheering Tidings from the Circuits — Incidents of the Session — Asbury and Lee leave New England.

It was found expedient, in the year 1798, to hold two Conferences for the accommodation of the widely dispersed preachers in New England — one at Readfield, Me., for the east, the other at Granville, Mass., for the west.

The former is memorable as the first Methodist Conference held in Maine. It began the 29th of August, and was an occasion of no ordinary interest. Methodism, though recent in the Province, had taken profound hold on the sympathies of the settlers, and hundreds flocked to the small village of Readfield, to witness the first assembly of its pioneers in their new and wilderness country. The place was thronged with the devout, who came to enjoy the spiritual advantages of the occasion, and the worldly, who were there to reap gain from it. "Several came," says Lee, "in their carts, with cakes,

&c., to sell. No one interrupted us in the meeting-house, but many were walking to and fro, and paid no attention to the meeting." *

The session lasted two days, Wednesday and Thursday. Ten preachers were present. Timothy Merritt, John Brodhead, Robert Yallalee, Aaron Humphrey, Roger Searle, Joshua Taylor, Jesse Stoneman, Enoch Mudge, and John Finnegan; Asbury made the tenth. On Wednesday "we were closely engaged all day," writes Lee, "much united in love and in the work of the ministry; we had some good accounts from different places, of a gracious revival of religion." † Timothy Merritt cheered them with delightful news of the triumphs of the truth along the banks of the Penobscot; Enoch Mudge, who had been appointed to Pleasant River, had spent much time with him, and they jointly extended the Circuit into many new settlements, the word sped its way, and 153 souls had been gathered into the new societies, besides scores, if not hundreds, who either entered other communions, or as yet none. Kennebec Circuit had heretofore yielded no returns, but Stoneman now brought the report of 105; the Spirit of God had been gloriously poured out on the Circuit. Roger Searle had also shared largely the divine visitation on Bath Circuit, where about seventy had been added to the feeble flock. Such were some of the "good accounts" of which Lee speaks. Nearly 1000 Methodists had been raised up in the Province, though but about four years had passed since Philip Wager was appointed as the first Methodist preacher to labor exclusively within the Province.

Wednesday was a "great day," says Asbury. The Conference began its usual business very early, and closed it by

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* Hist. of Meth., Anno 1798.

† Ibid.

8 o'clock, A. M., in order that the rest of the day might be devoted to public exercises. An immense throng had gathered in the village. At 9 o'clock, the doors of the new and yet unfinished chapel (the first erected in Maine) were thrown open for the "large number of Methodists, and none else."* Shut in from the throng, they held a love-feast together. Representatives of their common cause were there from all the surrounding region, and from several distant places. "It was a good time," says Lee, "they spoke freely and feelingly" of their Christian experience, and renewed their labors with God and each other. The multitude without heard their fervent ejaculations and exhilarating melodies, and waited impatiently for the public services.

At 11 o'clock the doors were opened. From "one thousand to eighteen hundred souls," says Asbury, attempted to get into the building; it was a solid mass of human beings. The galleries, which were yet unfinished, cracked and broke under the pressure, producing much alarm, and slightly injuring a few; but the services proceeded. Asbury ascended the rude pulpit and addressed his Itinerant brethren, from II. Cor., 4:1, 2: "*Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*" He has left us an outline of his discourse on this memorable occasion. He remarked first on—

> "*This ministry*, by way of eminence distinguished from the law — the ministry of the Spirit and power, and the word and letter of the gospel: Secondly, The apostolical manner of using the ministry — renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness,

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* Lee's Mem., p. 239.

nor handling the word of God deceitfully: not seeking either worldly honors, ease, or profit; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God — to sinners of all characters; to seekers, believers, men of tender and scrupulous consciences. Thirdly, The temptations, labors, and sufferings that faithful ministers have to meet with in the discharge of their duties. Fourthly, The support they shall have by the mercy and power of God, and fruit of their labors; Fifthly, *We faint not* — a person that fainteth loseth all action; is pale and dispirited: it is a near resemblance of death, and sometimes terminates in death. Unhappy the man who is dead and useless in the ministry!"

Thus did their great leader, bearing in his own person the marks of his unwearied labors, exhort the pioneers of Methodism in Maine to "faint not" in their extraordinary privations and toils. They gathered strength from the veteran's words, and welcomed the daily journies, the incessant preaching, the wintry storms and the spiritual victories of another year. Lee tells us that it was a "good sermon," and that, though the Bishop, before the meeting, appeared to be weak, yet during the discourse waxed "strong and courageous."

The ordination services followed, and were witnessed with great interest by the throng. Timothy Merritt, Robert Yallalee and Aaron Humphrey were ordained Deacons, and Roger Searle an Elder.* Lee describes it as a scene of deep solemnity.

The ordination being over, Lee, whose heart was full, mounted the pulpit and proclaimed to the multitude of Methodists present, "*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*" — Rom. 16 : 20. A divine influence fell upon the assembly, tears flowed in all parts of the house. "My soul," says Lee, "was animated with the presence of the Lord. It was a precious time to many." He could not but feel profoundly under the associations of the scene; only five years before, he wandered a solitary evangelist through the Province, without a single Methodist to welcome him, now multitudes were rising up over its length and breadth, and spreading into bands, and these were but the beginnings of a great work of God, which he unwaveringly believed would go on prosperously through all time.

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* Lee's Mem., p. 239.

Protracted as the services had been, there was still another exercise before they dispersed. They took the Lord's Supper together. It was, Lee tells us, " a most solemn time ;" more than two hundred persons communed. " I stood astonished," he exclaims, " at the sight ! to see so many people at the Lord's table, when it is not quite five years since we came into this part of the world."

Thus closed the first Conference in Maine. The preachers immediately hastened to their appointments. Asbury was away the same day. Lee tarried to complete some unfinished business, " thankful to God for the privilege of being at the first Conference ever held in the Province of Maine."

Let us pass now to the western session at Granville, Mass., held shortly afterwards.

Asbury pressed on westward with his usual speed. He was at Portland the Sabbath after the Readfield Conference, (Sept. 1,) having rode " sixty miles in two days," under the heat of the sun, and over " desperate roads and rocks." He preached there in the widow Bynton's back room, " to about, he says, twenty-five persons, chiefly women ; my subject was II. Peter, 2 : 9. In the afternoon I preached to about double the number on Phil. 3 : 8. I returned Sabbath evening to my very kind friend's house, Major Illsley's." The next day he travelled " 30 miles to Wells," on Tuesday 47 to Salisbury, on Thursday, 4th, he reached Lynn ; and the next day preached from Gal. 5 : 6, 8. He started the following day for Boston, but the retreat at Waltham presented a stronger charm ; " the heat," he says, " was excessive, and the sun met me in the face, so that I was almost ready to faint in the carriage: I changed my mind, and concluded to come on to Waltham, and spend another Sabbath. I missed my way a little, but came in about seven o'clock, riding, since two o'clock, twenty miles." He preached there the next day (Sabbath) twice. It was the finest portion of the year, and the retirement and beauty of the farm tempted him to delay — a temptation which it would have been better for his health oftener to indulge. He tarried three days, reposing on Monday and Tuesday, but on Wednesday renewed his journey, and preached at Weston. The few brethren of that society had been prospered somewhat, and had built a chapel, "a well designed building," says Asbury. He went into their new pulpit and encouraged them from I. Cor., 15: 58: "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*" Hastening forward, he reached Granville by Tuesday, 18th.

The Conference at Granville began at 8 o'clock on Wednesday, September 19, 1798, three weeks after the session at Readfield. It was the largest assemblage of Methodist preachers which had ever been convened in New England — about fifty being present — many of them from the neighboring Circuits of New York. "We had," says Asbury, "many weighty and deliberate conversations on interesting subjects, in much plainness and moderation;" and he tells us that they "had more good accounts of the work of God in different Circuits." Here, as at Readfield, encouraging tidings were brought from all directions. On Granville Circuit, where the Conference sat, more than forty renewed souls had been received into the new communion: Ebenezer Stevens brought the report from Pittsfield Circuit of a gain of more than seventy-five; Michael Coate could speak of the triumphs of grace on Middletown Circuit, where great numbers had been awakened and converted, and forty-two were received into the church; Shadrack Bostwick had seen remarkable displays of the divine influence on New London Circuit, the societies had been invigorated on all sides, and about one hundred members had been added to them. David Buck had good news from Redding Circuit; refreshing showers had fallen through its length and breadth, and an addition of seventy-three members had been made to its classes. Methodism had taken root on Martha's Vineyard, and Joshua Hall reported thirteen members, the first returns from that island. The society in Provincetown having endured persecutions courageously, had at last prevailed, its chapel was erected, and during the last year scores had been converted to God within its walls, a gain of more than one hundred was reported at the present Conference. Ralph Williston brought most cheering news from Vermont; more than two hundred had been received into the new societies of that State the past year.* There had been, in fine, a general outpouring of the Spirit in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont; and within the range of Circuits represented by their pastors in the present Conference, there had been an increase of about one thousand members. †

Ten new preachers were received at this session, "praise the Lord, O my soul," exclaims Lee, as he records the fact. Among these young men were Epaphras Kibby, now of the New England Conference, Daniel Webb, of Providence Conference, Asa Heath, of Maine, and also two remarkable men, generally known alike for their great labors and great eccentricities, Billy ‡ Hibbard and Lorenzo Dow. Twelve were ordained. The public services were impressive; Lee speaks of "a blessed time in preaching," when preachers and people were melted into tears. The Conference closed on Friday, 21st; the next day Asbury and Lee "began their flight," as the latter calls it. They were accompanied by twelve of the preachers who had been designated to the neighboring Circuits of New York. By Sunday afternoon they had crossed the boundary, and the Bishop was preaching the same evening at Dover.

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* Lee's Mem., p. 240. Vermont had made no returns previous to this Conference.

† Ibid.

‡ This familiar perversion of "William" was the real Christian name of Mr. Hibbard.

# CHAPTER XXIX.

## NOTICES OF PREACHERS.

Appointments — Preachers — William Beauchamp — His History — Talents — Character — Daniel Webb — Early Experience — Granville Circuit — Hawke — Norridgewock Circuit — Boston — Martin Ruter — Newport — Little Compton.

THE appointments for the year 1798–9 were as follows:— Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder; Portland*, Timothy Merritt; *Readfield*, Joshua Taylor, Jesse Stoneman; *Kennebec*, Roger Searle; *Bath* and *Union*, Robert Yallalee, Aaron Humphrey; *Penobscot*, Enoch Mudge, John Finnegan; *Pleasant River*, Peter Jane. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder; Warren*, John Brodhead; *Greenwich*, Stephen Hull; *Providence*, Joshua Hall; *Sandwich*, Epaphras Kibby; *Martha's Vineyard*, Joseph Snelling; *Provincetown*, Smith Weeks; *Boston*, Wm. Beauchamp; *Lynn*, Ralph Williston; *Needham*, Daniel Brumley; *Exeter*, John Nichols. Shadrach Bostwick, *Presiding Elder; Tolland*, Lawrence McCoombs; *New London*, Nathaniel Chapin, Shubal Lamb; *Pomfret*, Daniel Ostrander, Asa Heath, *Chesterfield*, Elijah Bachelor, *Ver-*

*shire*, Joseph Crawford. Also, on the New York District, which was superintended by Sylvester Hutchinson, were the following New England Circuits, viz: *Vergennes*, Joseph Mitchell, Abner Wood; *Pittsfield*, Joseph Sawyer, Reuben Hubbard, *Granville*, Ezekiel Canfield, Daniel Webb; *Litchfield*, Ebenezer Stevens, Freeman Bishop; *Redding*, Wm Thatcher; *Middletown*, Augustus Jocelyn.

William Beauchamp was a man of genuine greatness, one of nature's noblemen and God's elect. He was born in the County of Kent, Del., April 26, 1772.

His father, a respectable Methodist preacher, removed in the year 1788 or '89, to the western part of the State of Virginia, settled on the Monongahela River, and after residing there six or eight years, again removed and settled on the little Kenhawa River, in Wood county, Virginia, where he and Mr. Rees Wolfe, another preacher, formed societies.

At an early period of his life, Mr. B. had religious impressions; at the age of five years he was deeply awakened, and in the seventh year of his age experienced a change of heart. Having been provoked by one of his brothers, he gave way to anger, and for some time thought he had lost his religion. When about fifteen or sixteen years old his spiritual strength was renewed, and he then became a regular member of the church. Some time after he began to exhort. In Delaware, for a short time, he was sent to a seminary of learning, and acquired a knowledge of English grammar, and some knowledge of the Latin. In 1790 he taught school in Monongahela. At the age of nineteen he began to preach. In the year 1793, in the 21st year of his age, he left his father's house on the Monongahela, and travelled under the presiding elder. In 1794 he joined the Itinerancy, and was stationed on the Alleghany Circuit, which he travelled two years. The next year, 1796, he was appointed to Pittsburg Circuit: in 1797 he was stationed in New York, and in 1798 in Boston. From thence, in 1799, he was removed to Provincetown, Massachusetts: in 1800 he was stationed in Nantucket. Mr. Cannon, then a local preacher, had preached there with considerable success; as the prospect appeared flattering, he solicited the aid of the travelling ministry, and Mr. Beauchamp was sent to his help. He had not been in this station more than six months, when a society of between seventy and eighty members was raised up; and before he left it, a large and commodious meeting-house was built.*

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* Meth. Mag., 1825.

In the following year, 1801, he located, and on the 7th of June married Mrs. Frances Russell. She was among the most excellent of women. In 1807, Mr. B. removed from Nantucket, and settled near his father, in Wood county, (Va.) on the little Kenhawa.

He continued there, preaching with great popularity and usefulness, till 1815, when he removed to Chillicothe, Ohio, to take the editorial charge of the "Western Christian Monitor," the only periodical publication at that time in our church. He had previously published his "Essays on the truth of the Christian Religion," a work of decided merit in the estimation of good critics; he edited the Monitor with conspicuous ability, and preached meanwhile at and about Chillicothe with eminent success. The whole community paid him the respect and homage due to his great talents and exalted character, and a remarkable revival of religion, which occurred soon after his removal, is attributed to his previous instrumentality. He was pronounced the "Demosthenes of the West."

In 1817, Mr. Beauchamp removed to Mount Carmel, Ill., where he was employed in founding a settlement. He showed himself the truly great man in all the details of this new business, planning public measures and economical arrangements, devising mechanical improvements, for which he had a rare genius, directing the instructions of the youth and simplifying its modes, ministering as pastor to the congregation, and meanwhile advancing in his own personal studies and improvement.

In 1822, he re-entered the Itinerant ministry in the Missouri Conference; he labored successfully one year at St. Louis, and in 1823 was appointed Presiding Elder on Indiana District, which included eleven vast Circuits, and was nearly coextensive with the bounds of the State. He was sent, the same year, a delegate to the General Conference at Baltimore, and such was the impression produced by his remarkable traits that he lacked but two votes of an election to the Episcopal office. He would undoubtedly have been elected were it not for the objection that so large a portion of his life had been spent out of the Itinerancy.

On his return to his District he was seized by an old complaint, an affection of the liver, and after suffering patiently for about six weeks, fell asleep in Christ with full hope of immortality. His biographer says:

> He was conscious of his approaching dissolution, and was fully prepared to meet it. He exhorted his wife to be resigned to the event, and to meet him in glory. His treasure, he said, was in Heaven. Numbers called to see him; it was all peace, all calmness with him. A few days before he expired, Mr. Beall felt his pulse; he asked him how it was; Mr. B. said it was irregular; he rejoiced, and replied that it would soon cease, to beat no more. Eternity appeared to be opened to his view, his work was done, and he was ready to go. A short time before he expired he prayed for an easy passage through the gates of death. The Lord heard his prayer; and he died so easy, that he glided into eternity, glorious eternity! almost before it was perceived he was gone. Thus expired our great and good brother, William Beauchamp, on Thursday night about 12 o'clock, at Mr. Joseph Peck's, in Peoli, Orange county, Indiana, on the 7th day of October, 1824, in the 53d year of his age.*

The same writer gives the following account of his manner as a preacher:

> He had a little stoop of the shoulders, and when speaking in public his gestures were natural and easy. His voice was very uniform, remarkably soft in social conversation, but in argument energetic. In his preaching, when holding out the promises and the invitations of the gospel, there was a soft tenderness, a sweetness in his voice, produced frequently by gentle breaks, as if the rising sympathies of his soul obstructed in some degree his utterance; when a gentle thrilling sensation appeared to move the listening multitude, all bending forward to catch every sentence or word as it fell from his lips. This circumstance has frequently been admired. But when he became argumentative, and discussed doctrinal points, or when false doctrines were attacked, the tone of his voice was elevated, his whole system became

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* See Meth. Mag. of 1825.

nerved and his voice assumed a deep hollow tone, and then soon became elevated to its highest key, and fell like peals of thunder on the ears of the listening assembly. On one occasion the force of his powerful eloquence was fully demonstrated; it was on a subject of controversy. His antagonist, who had sat and listened for some length of time, to arguments too powerful for him to answer, began to look as if the voice which he now heard came from another world, through the shadow of a man; he rose, apparently with a view to leave the house, but being so overcome, he staggered, caught by the railing, reeled, and fell to his seat, and there sat overwhelmed and confounded, until the discourse was concluded, when he quietly stepped from the house. His manner of preaching was plain; he seldom divided his subject into different heads, but took the natural division of the text. His sermons were deep, and made a lasting impression upon the mind, because they were both practical and doctrinal. Holiness was his theme; there was seldom a shout raised in the assembly under his preaching, but always strict attention was paid to his discourses, every eye was fixed upon the speaker, and frequently the people were all bathed in tears.*

Mr. Beauchamp was an arduous student. His early conveniences for mental culture were quite limited, but besides the usual variety of English studies, he became in later life a master of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. While yet residing on the Monongahela, where the school-master had never yet penetrated, he was so smitten with the love of knowledge, that when the family had retired to bed, he would stretch himself on the floor before the hearth, and, with torch-lights for candles, spend most of the night in communion with his favorite authors.

His style of preaching is said to have been severely chaste and dignified; no attempts at meretricious ornament or imaginative effect, no boisterous declamation or far-fetched novelties of thought or diction, but a stern energy of intellect, logical conclusiveness, a solemn feeling, gradually rising to a commanding and sometimes overpowering force, were the characteristics of this truly great divine. He erred in not adhering to the Itinerant ministry, through whatever inconveniences, for such abilities could not have failed to work out for his family all necessary temporal securities, and for himself a rare career of usefulness. Had it not been for this capital error of his life, his name would have honored the history of our Episcopacy.

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* Meth. Mag. of 1825.

Another conspicuous name appears in the list of the New England appointments, the present year — that of Daniel Webb; the *oldest effective Methodist preacher in the World.* He was born in Canterbury, Windham County, Conn., April 1778. The Methodist Itinerants began to preach in that town about 1793 or 1794. Mr. Webb early heard Mudge, Pickering, Bostwick, and Merritt. They preached at the house of Capt. Ephraim Lyon, in the south-west part of Canterbury. Very soon a class was formed, and that place was made one of the Sabbath appointments of the New London Circuit. "I have heard," writes Mr. Webb, "my father say that James Coleman was his spiritual father, having been awakened by his instrumentality, though converted under the labors of Enoch Mudge. I well remember the morning when he addressed his family, telling them what the Lord had done for his soul, and expressing his conviction of the duty of family devotion, which he then commenced, and continued to practice, as he was able, while he lived.

The Holy Spirit accompanied the preaching of the Itinerants to his heart, and he was frequently almost persuaded to be a Christian. He formed many purposes of reformation, but as often broke them.

At length, he writes, a young woman, a member of the M. E. Church, came to my father's house to work as a tailoress. She was faithful to her Lord, religion was the theme of her conversation. Having an opportunity one day, she said to me, "My young friend, what do you think of religion?" I replied, "I think it to be a good and a necessary thing for all persons before they die." "Then," said she, "what objection have you to seeking it now?" Said I, "if I could have my young companions with me I should be willing to seek it now." She then said, "My dear friend, do not wait for your companions; you may perhaps be in your grave before they will turn to the Lord." These words were as a nail in a sure place. They arrested my attention. They took hold of my heart. I began to pray, God be merciful to me a sinner! I saw that it would be just in God to cast me off and send me to hell. I was led to cry the more for mercy; and in about four weeks from the time of her faithfulness to me, in a little prayer meeting, the Lord spoke peace to my soul; and the next day, in a wood, he gave me a sealing evidence of my acceptance with him, and I went on my way rejoicing.

"Telling to sinners round,
What a dear Savior I had found,"

and inviting them to come and taste and see the goodness of the Lord. This was in the year 1797, and in the month of August.

"I found," he says, "that it was impossible for me to enjoy the comforts of religion unless I spoke of the Lord's goodness, and exhorted sinners to flee from the wrath to come." The following spring he accompanied John Nichols, stationed on New London Circuit, partly round the Circuit, and exhorted after he had preached. The other preacher, Shadrack Bostwick, being about to exchange with Peter Vannest on Middletown Circuit, Connecticut, proposed to him to accompany him thither; this he also did, and on the way made his first attempt to preach, in Hebron, at the house of Samuel Wright; the next day he repeated the attempt at the house of a Mr. White, in the same neighborhood. "My first text," he writes, "was 'Worship God,' and the second was, 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' I next attempted to preach in the city of Middletown, and did so frequently while going with Bro. Bostwick around that Circuit. Sometimes I spoke with freedom, and sometimes was almost confounded before the people."

The next September, 1798, being properly recommended to the annual Conference in Granville, Mass., he was admitted on trial as a travelling preacher, with E. Kibby, Asa Heath, Reuben Hubbard, Billy Hibbard, Truman Bishop, S. Lamb and others; and was stationed on Granville Circuit, with Rev. Ezekiel Canfield. That Circuit was then 200 miles in circumference, including the towns of Granville, Granby, Suffield, Westfield, West Springfield, Southampton. Northampton, Cummington, Ashfield, Buckland, Worthington, Dalton, Partridgefield, Washington, Pittsfield, Lee, Tyringham, Sandisfield, Blandford, Chester, and several others. "We had," he writes, "to cross the Green Mountains twice in each round. I frequently had to dismount my horse, and break through the snow banks to get him along. We preached almost every day, besides visiting, and attending prayer and class-meetings, so that our labors were very considerable. My next appointment, 1799, by the direction of the Presiding Elder, Brother Pickering, was Sandwich, Mass., instead of Martha's Vineyard, to which the Conference sent me. This was a two weeks Circuit. The Sabbath appointments were Sandwich Town and Monument. The societies were small, and the encouragement but little — the germ only of the present state of things there. After laboring there about three months, the Presiding Elder directed me to Hawke, now Danville, in the south-easterly part of New Hampshire, where there were no Methodist churches formed; but the ground had been partially broken up by George Pickering, Ralph Williston, John Nichols and perhaps others. Epaphras Kibby was also sent into that country about the same time, but he labored principally in Poplin and East Kingston. He occasionally visited me and I him; we tried to encourage and assist each other in our hard labors and privations. We had been there but a few months before the Lord blessed our efforts, and a class was formed first in Hawke and then in Poplin, and at a later period in East Kingston.

At the next Conference, which was in Lynn, June, 1800, he was ordained a deacon by Bishop Whatcoat, and stationed on Norridgewock Circuit, in the District of Maine. That Circuit included the towns of Starks, Norridgewock, Canaan, Fairfield, Anson, and the settlements then called Industry, New Portland, Barnardstown, Carryatuck Falls, &c. He also visited Vassalborough and preached there once or twice. "I went," he says, "very reluctantly to the Circuit, having heard a great many frightful stories about the country. Setting aside the disgrace of it, perhaps I should have felt but little worse if I had been doomed to the State prison for a year. But we do not know always what is best for us. It proved to be one of the happiest and most prosperous years of my ministerial life. There was a good revival in Norridgewock and in Industry. I left the Circuit with reluctance, "sorrowing most of all" that, probably, "I should see their faces no more."

At the Conference which sat in Lynn, 1801, he was appointed to labor in Salisbury and parts adjacent; also in 1802, in the same regions. In 1803, he was stationed in Marblehead, and in 1804 in Hawke and vicinity. His labors extended also to Salem, in New Hampshire.

At the next Conference, 1805, he was stationed in Lynn, Mass., and preached in the old Lee meeting-house which stood at the east end of the Common.

The established church of the village had not yet relented in its hostility, and menaces of a prosecution had been uttered against his predecessor, Peter Jane, for marrying one or more couples — members of his own congregation. Bishop Asbury took measures, in the appointment of Mr. Webb, to meet this embarrassing difficulty, by imitating some of the forms of a "regular settlement." "He told the church," says Mr. Webb, "that he had appointed me to be their Pastor. They signified their acceptance of me as such; and *he gave me a charge and a token of fellowship.*" Afterwards, the preachers stationed in Boston and Marblehead, with their people, went through similar ceremonies; and the objections to the legality of marrying, solemnized by Methodist ministers, ceased.

He continued in Lynn two years, and at the Conference in Boston, 1807, was appointed, with George Pickering, to that city. The Conference rose on Saturday, and he returned immediately to his family at Lynn. Bishop Asbury, also, went thither, and lodged at Benjamin Johnson's. Early the next morning a committee, consisting of three of the chief men of the Boston church, arrived, and remonstrated to the Bishop against the substitution of Mr. Webb in the place of Mr. Merwin, who had been in the city the preceding year. "It will not do," replied the Bishop, "he will die if he stays there; he must go to Newport." The committee returned in no very agreeable mood. At first, Mr. Webb was reluctantly received, "but," he says, "Bro. Pickering and I went to our work with one heart, and hand in hand. He was foremost in every good work, and I endeavored to follow on. We were cordially received, after a few weeks. The Lord blessed our labors, and many souls were brought to the knowledge of the truth — considerably over one hundred, I believe. Our brethren in the ministry, T. C. Peirce and T. W. Tucker, were converted this year."

The church was in debt three or four hundred dollars for the expenses of the last year. By the blessing of God on the means that were used, the debt and all the expenses of the current year, were paid; and, as a society, at the conclusion of the year they owed nothing.

At the Conference of 1808, he was reappointed to Boston, with Martin Ruter for his colleague. "He, being a widower," says Mr. Webb, "boarded with me. He was a man of a rather feeble constitution, much devoted to God, of much more than ordinary preaching abilities, and very much loved and respected by the people. He was very studious — a self-taught scholar. He was not only well acquainted with his mother tongue, but had a good knowledge of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew and French languages, and that year paid some attention to the Arabic and Persian. He was versed in theology, and well read in the history of the church. We labored in harmony and peace, and had prosperity. Near the close of the year we found that an extra exertion must be made, or we should leave the church in debt. Accordingly, a steward's report was made out, and read at the last love-feast, by which it appeared that several hundred dollars were wanted to square off our church concerns. The question was asked in the love-feast, What shall be done? One replied, circulate a subscription. In the course of a few days, all the bills were paid, and the church again free from debt. Brother Ruter and I could then sing, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped us; the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' Souls had been converted — the church had been edified and built up on her most holy faith; and Methodism stood as fair and prominent in Boston as it had ever done." Such was the result of Bishop Asbury's obstinacy. Messrs. Ruter and Webb departed to other fields at the end of the year, (in 1809,) with the affections and regrets of the church. The evening before the latter left for his new appointment, the brethren pressed into his house with blessings on their tongues and in their hands; many had been converted during the year, among whom were several who became preachers; fiscal embarrassments had been thrown off, and all the interests of the society invigorated.

"The next morning," says Mr. Webb, "about three o'clock, we went on board the stage bound to Newport. Our goods having arrived, we took a tenement, and were once more pleasantly settled. The church was small, — but about thirty in number, — and the congregation considerable — the meeting-house large and good."

Mr. W. continued in Newport two years, as an effective man ; and then, it being not convenient for him to remove, because of some family circumstances, by the advice of his Presiding Elder he asked and obtained a supernumerary relation, and continued in the same place another year.

He continued two years longer in the travelling ministry, during which he was stationed at Lynn. His family had become burdensome, and as little provision was then made for the support of married preachers, he was under the necessity of locating in 1814. He removed to Newport, where he spent nine years as a local preacher, supplying the place of a travelling one, and teaching school, meanwhile, for his support. At the expiration of this interval, he was readmitted to the Conference, and appointed for two years to Newport. "While there," he writes, "I preached nearly as much as any of the travelling preachers, and taught a large school the most of the time, so that I had the work of two men on my hands. We were blessed with several good revivals of religion. During the term of my location, a family by the name of Sisson moved from Newport to the town of Little Compton, R. I., and I and other preachers were invited to visit and preach to them. This was the means of introducing Methodism into that place, and of raising up a society there ; which, though comparatively small, continues till this day. I baptized nine adults belonging to that family in one day, viz : the father, mother, uncle, son, daughter-in-law, daughters, and a hired man ; several others of the family were baptized afterwards."

In 1825, he was appointed to Providence, R. I. His subsequent appointments have been Springfield, Boston as publisher of Zion's Herald, Nantucket, Fall River, New Bedford, New Bedford District as Presiding Elder, New London, Charlestown, New Bedford again, and Watertown Mission. At the latter place he was afflicted with dangerous illness, and the next year was returned on the superannuated list, but recovered sufficiently before the close of the year to take charge of the Danvers society. He was afterwards sent to Ipswich, Mass., Little Compton, R. I., Fairhaven, Head of the River in Fairhaven, and Whittenton Factory in Taunton, Mass. In several of these appointments his labors have been attended by extensive revivals of religion, and the fruits of his ministry are found abundantly in various parts of the church.

Mr. Webb has been distinguished among us by the unsullied purity of his character, his unpretending but cordial manners, the perspicuity, systematic arrangement and evangelical richness of his pulpit discourses, and his steadfast interest for primitive Methodism. He has shared fully in the trials as well as the triumphs of our cause, and is venerated as a faithful and beloved veteran, worthy of the peculiar honor which he bears, as the *oldest effective Methodist preacher in the world.*

# CHAPTER XXX.

## NOTICES OF PREACHERS.

Epaphras Kibby — George Roberts — Sandwich — Readfield Circuit — Itinerant Hardships — Revival at Monmouth — Hallowell — Persecution — New Bedford — Provincetown — Joshua Soule — His Early Life — Itinerant Labors — Book Agency — Election to the Episcopacy — Characteristics — Elijah Bachelor.

Epaphras Kibby was born in Somers, Conn., in 1777. He was blessed with a pious mother, whose instructions produced in his mind early and strong religious impressions. In his eighth year he was awakened by the Spirit of God, and sought the divine mercy with tears. He afterwards relapsed into carelessness, but on hearing George Roberts, was again aroused, and so profoundly convicted that he found no relief till he received the inward witness that his sins were forgiven. "One sermon," he writes,* "from this powerful, eloquent man was all-sufficient, under the divine Spirit, to rouse my guilty soul, and to extort the cry, 'What shall I do to be saved!'" It is a little remarkable that the sermon which produced this effect, was on a controversial occasion. A Universalist clergyman visited the town to scatter his pernicious tenets. Mr. Roberts heard him in the court-house, and perceiving the dangerous plausibility of his discourse, announced a rejoinder in the evening at the same place ; a crowd assembled to witness the rencontre. Roberts was a man of great earnestness and power, he not only confounded the logic of his antagonist, utterly baffling him before the assembly, but dealt home such resistless admonitions to the latter, that some thirteen or fourteen young men were awakened on the spot.

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* Letter to the Author.

> "I felt," says Mr. Kibby, "as I never did before. I prayed, I tried to weep, but I could not. I tried to repent, but my heart was as hard as a stone. And thus, for three weeks, I went with my head bowed down like a bulrush, attending all the meetings, sometimes spending the whole night on my knees in prayer, carrying about a body of sin and death, until I once rose up in meeting, to tell the sympathizing Christians that in my case there was no hope. But before my lips pronounced the words, the power of God fell upon me. I sunk into my chair. Rays of light, heavenly and divine, fell upon my dark understanding. The love of God filled my whole soul; the Holy Ghost descended upon the people, and the shout of a king was among us. O, what a day! a day never to be forgotten. My captivity was turned and Israel was glad."

This was in 1793. He immediately joined the little company of Methodists in New London. The Circuit preachers in their occasional visits, perceived his talents and graces, and intimated their impressions that it was his duty to preach. He felt, however, his lack of qualifications, and gave no heed to the suggestion. Before long, Wilson Lee met him at New London.

> "He was a man of great faith, mighty in the Scriptures, and full of the Holy Ghost. He did not, like others, ask the question, Does not God call you to preach, but affirmed that it was so, and that I *must* obey the call. This gave me no little trouble. I tried to shake it off, but could not. I felt so uneasy about it, that sometimes I could wish that Paul had forgotten to write on his parchment, I. Cor. 9: 16."

He subsequently removed to Suffield, Conn. Learning of a meeting, he went ten or twelve miles to hear Joseph Mitchell preach. It was in a barn. While he was preaching, the power of the word overwhelmed the people in a wonderful manner. The place was filled with the divine presence. After preaching, a prayer-meeting was held at the house, to supplicate a deeper work of grace. "The occasion was glorious," says Mr. Kibby. "Here, while deeply engaged in prayer, I became prostrate before God. Some said I was dying; others that I was dead. I had much bodily exercise, but no satisfaction of mind. But soon after I recovered from this humiliating condition, I felt as I never did before. The love of God ran through my soul in such a manner, that I thought I was not only blessed in my spirit, but in my body also."

This fresh baptism of the Spirit led him to think more seriously of the ministry. He attended the Granville Conference in 1798. All the preachers of his acquaintance soon clustered round him, and urged him to engage in the great work of saving souls. And from the consideration of the greatness of the harvest and the limited number of the laborers, he was induced to give his consent. He was introduced to Mr. Asbury. "After surveying me for a moment," writes Mr. Kibby, "he remarked, mistaking a new suit of jean for silk, 'They that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.' And, moreover, said, 'That young man is not adequate to the rough work of the Itinerancy.' But the voices of the preachers prevailed, and I was admitted on trial. My name was read off for Sandwich. I told Mr. Asbury, privately, that I *never attempted to preach a sermon in my life*, and knew not that I could. I begged to be put upon a Circuit with a preacher. I said I was not qualified to take charge of a station, and could not go to Sandwich. But he was inflexible. 'Go,' said he, 'my son, and God be with you. Do the best you can; an angel can't do better.'"

He left Conference in company with a number of preachers, among whom were J. Hall and S. Snelling. The former stopped at Providence, the latter introduced him to his charge, and then pushed on to his appointment, some distance beyond. When thus parted from all the preachers, and left among strangers, he felt sadly depressed. On the way from the Conference to his station, it was a question of deep interest with him, whether he could preach or not, having never actually attempted it. But after he arrived he was soon put to the test. The people were so anxious to hear the new preacher, that they appointed a lecture for him the very evening of his arrival. "It was well," he says, "that it was in a private house. I was punctual to the time. The people being present, I began, and proceeded very well until I named my text; then my heart began to flutter. I said a few words — was confounded — my mouth was shut, and I sat down. Well, said I to myself, you have found out at last whether you can preach. The people felt mortified and sorry, but there were no upbraiding looks. They made the best of it. They seemed still confident that I could preach. But I thought differently. At an early hour I retired, but could not sleep. I finally concluded to rise very early in the morning, before the family were up, and retrace my steps to my home. I fell asleep, however, dreaming of unpleasant things, and did not awake until the sun was high up. So my plan was frustrated."

His appointment for the next Sabbath was in another parish of the same town. Here his congregation consisted of Methodists and Congregationalists. He resolved not to mortify both them and himself. He was determined to leave the field and go home. But when he came to two ways, one leading to his appointment and the other towards Connecticut, he halted. After deliberating for some time, he was unable to decide. He then threw the reins of the bridle on the neck of his horse. The horse chose the way to the appointment. Thus was he prevented from a course which might have affected his whole life, and the fate of scores and hundreds of souls.

The Sabbath was the first in October, a lovely day. When he saw the people gathering, he felt dejected; he sighed, he groaned, he prayed. But go he must. He took his hymn-book and little Bible under his arm and walked deliberately to the meeting-house, in all the self-possession that he could wish. After having gone through the introductory services, he announced his text, and preached with remarkable liberty, and to the admiration of the audience. In the afternoon he had still greater freedom. He was astonished at himself, and a murmur of satisfaction pervaded the entire assembly. Subsequently, a professional gentleman, a graduate of Harvard College, requested a copy of the sermons for the press, offering to take the risk of their publication on himself. But he was told that not one word of them was written, and it was not possible then to recollect them.

Mr. Kibby suspected a joke in the request, but it was sincere and merited. In no instance afterwards, did he suffer embarrassment while at Sandwich. The sympathy and admiration of the community immediately gathered about him; his popularity was universal, through the three parishes which formed his Circuit; the church was quickened, and the cause of God prospered.

Before the year was out, he was removed by his Presiding Elder, George Pickering, to Needham Circuit, to meet special exigencies in the condition of that Circuit; his travels there were extensive, and being in the winter, were attended with severe and most trying exposures; his horse failed under them, and perished, and though he found many hospitable homes, especially at Pickering's comfortable mansion — the favorite asylum of the weary Itinerants of the day — yet he began to recall Asbury's declaration that he could not bear the rugged trials of the Itinerancy. God nerved him, however, for the task, and he persevered.

At the New York Conference, in 1799, he was appointed to the New Rochelle Circuit, N. Y., and so appears in the Minutes; but immediately after the adjournment of that body, and before he had left for his appointment, he was sent by the Presiding Elder to Martha's Vineyard. In about three months he was again changed by Pickering, and sent to supply a new appointment in a Congregational church at East Kingston, N. H. Here his talents excited general interest, he was called to preach in every direction, and with the true spirit of the Itinerancy, "went about doing good"— his excursions taking in all the neighboring towns—Sandown, Poplin, Epping, Newtown, Hawke or Danville as now called, &c., &c. He helped to lay the foundation of our cause in all that region; many were awakened and converted under his ministrations, for his word was in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Prejudice against the Methodist ministry was swept away, and the doctrines of Methodism under his lucid discussions became generally approved. He had to encounter, however, for some time, that zeal for "principles," which Lee and his associates so often provoked. He was met in private with grave reasoning about Foreknowledge, Decrees, Election and Reprobation, and sometimes interrupted by sturdy speculators in his public services; but he always, both by his keen logic and kindly spirit, silenced his opponents, and sometimes conquered not only their logic but their prejudices.

Such rencontres only tended to give new interest to the labors of the youthful Itinerant; his popularity was widespread, and, in meekness of wisdom and eloquence of speech, he went forth through all the region round about, proclaiming the doctrines of general redemption and free salvation.

In 1800, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Whatcoat, at the Lynn Conference, and appointed to Maine. It seemed a distant and appalling field to him, but he was accompanied and cheered on the way by a convoy of brave-spirited Itinerants, Merritt, Heath, Webb, &c., all bound to Circuits in Maine. When he arrived, he found a vast sphere of labor before him. Readfield Circuit then included Monmouth, Winthrop, Readfield, Kent's Hill, Montville, Vienna, New Sharon, Farmington, Strong, Bethel the extreme settlement on Sandy River, New Vineyard, Wilton, Jay, Livermore, Fayette, Wayne, Leeds and Green, besides many smaller appointments. He preached and travelled every day, except one Saturday in each month. The roads were new and at times dangerous to man and beast. In one section of the Circuit he had to pass through a forest six miles in extent, at first with a guide, and subsequently by marks upon the trees. Frequently, he was obliged to cross frozen streams when the ice would not bear his horse; but while he himself walked upon it, the latter, led by his hand, had to break a way, cutting himself with ice and coming forth exhausted and bloody from the struggle. In other seasons, these streams had to be forded or swam, often at the risk of life. In those remote regions he usually slept in log cabins, through the rude roofs of which the stars shone upon his slumbers and the snow fell upon his bed, forming a cover by morning several inches thick.

Again his spirit sunk within him. Such exposures and labors seemed impracticable; he felt that he must retreat, but God interposed for him. When about to give up in despair, a marvellous revival of religion broke out on the Circuit; he took fresh courage and went on his way rejoicing. This event was of too remarkable a character to be omitted here.

While doubting and praying, respecting his duty to remain on the Circuit, a young gentleman of Monmouth, of high position in society, heard him accidentally at a neighboring village, and on returning to Monmouth reported among his neighbors an exalted opinion of the young preacher's talents and character, and particularly urged his own wife to go and hear him when he should arrive in their town. He himself made no pretensions to piety; his lady had been deeply serious some time before, but had apparently lost her religious convictions. She declined hearing the new preacher; but a mysterious interest, which she could not repress, was excited in her mind by the divine Spirit.

Some time subsequently, Mr. Kibby was called to the village to attend the funeral services of a child, at the Congregational church. On his way to the chapel, he dismounted at the house where the dead child lay, and spoke a few words of condolence and exhortation to the family. He noticed, meanwhile, among the visitors, a young lady whose countenance and whole appearance denoted profound and almost insupportable emotion. He felt that the spirit of God was hovering over the group, and that the place was awful and glorious — the house of God and the gate of heaven. He passed on to the church, to be prepared for the services by the time the funeral company should arrive. The edifice was small and unfinished, having yet no pulpit, but a table and chair for the speaker, and temporary seats for the singers and audience. As he sat waiting, a divine afflatus seemed to descend upon him and those who had assembled, and as others arrived, one after another, a manifest awe seized them. He has been heard to say that he never before nor since witnessed a more direct and remarkable agency of the spirit of God. Soon the lady, whose emotions were so visible at the dwelling-house, arrived, and took a seat, tremblingly, near the door, but where the whole assembly perceived her. Without an audible expression, her countenance and demeanor exhibited unutterable feeling, and the whole audience soon seemed to share it. The preacher proceeded with his discourse with unusual interest and solemnity. As he advanced, exhibiting the mercy of God, the feeling of awe which had hitherto absorbed the assembly seemed to change, a glad and grateful emotion sped through the mass, a bright and glowing expression shone on their faces, and the lady referred to, with streaming tears and overflowing heart, found peace with God, and was, as it were, transfigured before them. When they rose to sing, she fell insensible under her intense feelings; her husband, near her, was smitten down, and dropped upon his seat; the presence of God seemed to overshadow the place, and the assembly was overwhelmed. The lady herself became a devoted member of the church; her husband, General Mc——, subsequently experienced the saving grace of God, and their family is still known on the Kennebec for its affluent and Christian hospitality, and its devotion to the interests of Methodism. It afterwards became the germ of the Methodist church in Bath.

The influence of this remarkable meeting spread like a flame through the town and neighboring villages, and, indeed, more or less over the Circuit. Sinners were awakened in all directions, the saints of God shouted aloud for joy, new societies were formed, and the older ones reinvigorated. The sinking heart of the preacher was fortified forever. He thought no more of shrinking from his post, but went forward in the power and might of his mission.

These scenes at Monmouth led to the introduction of Methodism in Hallowell. A young man at the former, but belonging to the latter, entreated Mr. Kibby to visit that town and proclaim the message of life to its inhabitants. He consented, — passed into the village, procured a school house, and had a large congregation, but at the end of the service his hearers all retired, leaving him alone without an invitation to any of their homes, or an intimation of their approval or disapproval of his doctrines. He felt disappointed, mortified, and mounting his horse rode four miles to Augusta for a supper, believing that he had erred in going to Hallowell. On arriving at Augusta, some gentlemen of high respectability, who admired his talents, appointed a meeting for him in a hall. When he entered it, he found an apparently selected audience. After the sermon, one of the hearers arose and said, "I approve these doctrines and esteem this man," and throwing a dollar on the table, he added, "you, gentlemen, may do thus likewise." A shower of silver dollars came down upon the table; the preacher refused them, but he was urged and compelled to receive them. It was no superfluous bounty, but a most opportune Providence — meeting necessities which could hardly have otherwise been sustained. But a more cheering incident followed. Before he left the hall, he was compensated, somewhat, for his mortifying treatment at Hallowell. A man, trembling with emotion, took him by the hand and inquired, "When, Sir, are you coming again to Hallowell?" "Never, Sir," replied the preacher. "Do, do, come once more," rejoined the stranger, with tears, "for your discourse there, to-day, has awakened my guilty soul." Unexpected results of one day!

Mr. Kibby saw the hand of God in these things. He sent back by the stranger an appointment at Hallowell, for four weeks afterwards — the time of his next return to that part of the Circuit. When he arrived, he found that the awakened man had been converted. The house was crowded, and he was embarrassed with invitations to hospitable homes; he tarried the next day and spent it in visiting from house to house, and nearly every family he called upon he found under the awakening influence of the divine Spirit. God was at work among the people ; a revival broke out which spread through the whole population, and the *first Methodist society of Hallowell* was formed. The two first persons — a man and his wife — converted in this extraordinary reformation, presented their two sons to Mr. K. for baptism. They were twins, and scarcely distinguishable. He offered them specially to God in prayer, and by that holy rite. One of them now sleeps in his grave, in Africa *the first Foreign Missionary* of the Methodist Episcopal church. The other is yet an eminent preacher of our church, in New England.

As usual, this wide-spread interest provoked hostility. Mr. Kibby was mobbed while preaching at the "Hook," one day, and the stones flew about his head, endangering the lives of himself and hearers, but he persisted till he finished his discourse. Some days afterwards, a request was sent him by Colonel F., to return and preach there again. From the respectability of the invitation, he felt safe in accepting it. He went, but on approaching the place of worship, saw men armed with weapons, moving about it. He advanced, however, ascended the desk, and preached with his usual power. Meanwhile, the armed men passed in and out of the door, occasionally, but with the utmost respect. He afterwards learned that Colonel F. had expressed his determination to fight down the mob — hiring these men to meet the rabble, and defying the latter to make their appearance when the preacher should return. The expedient, however, doubtful, succeeded. The word of God prevailed, the revival went forward, and the leader of the mob — a young lawyer — subsequently became converted and went to heaven in the triumphs of God's redeeming grace. It would fill pages were we to record the numerous romantic incidents and providential interpositions which occurred during Mr. Kibby's travels on this Circuit.

In 1801, he was left, at his own request, without an appointment, that he might settle some personal business, but in three months was again on Readfield Circuit. Thence he passed to Bristol Circuit, in the same State, to supply the place of a preacher who had failed ; but such were his labors and exposures, that he entirely lost his voice in a few weeks. He was constrained to desist till the next Conference, which was held at Monmouth, July 1st, 1802. He was then appointed to Marblehead, where he had some trials, but also extensive success — an account of which will be found hereafter, in our sketch of the history of that church.

In 1803–4, he was stationed in Boston. Difficulties and discords had seriously injured that society, and Asbury removed him thither from confidence in his prudence and capability to amend the trouble. He succeeded the first year in effecting a restoration of harmony, and during the second an extensive revival took place. The chapel in Hanover avenue was thronged with awakened hearers, and about one hundred and fifty were added to the society.

In 1805, Mr. Kibby was appointed to Providence, R. I., but his health failed almost immediately after his arrival. After languishing some time, unable to preach, he was taken into the country by a friend, under whose hospitable care he partially recovered ; thence, he went to New Bedford, where he was engaged to supply the pulpit of Dr. West. He tarried there till the next Conference, when Bishop Asbury returned him to the same post. But before many weeks he was called by the Presiding Elder to take the place of the lamented Peter Jane, who died in Boston. He made, however, a transient visit again to New Bedford, and under a sermon which he delivered on the text, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" &c., an impression was produced which resulted in a general revival of religion in the town. He was reappointed there, at the next Conference, and found the effect of that single discourse prosperous and wide-spread; the fields were ripe unto the harvest. The excitement extended on both sides of the river, and multitudes were converted and gathered into the church. The *first Methodist Society of New Bedford was formed by Mr. Kibby, in this revival.*

He was returned to the same appointment, also by Asbury, in 1808. In 1809–10, he was at Portland. His health had failed, however, and he requested a location, that he might repose from his labors sufficiently to regain it. His request was granted the next year. He spent some time at Saratoga Springs, and on recovering, somewhat, took charge, a part of the year, of a Congregational church in New Bedford, and (during another part of it) the Methodist society at Woodend, Lynn. He was still unable, however, to do effective service, and continued in the local ranks in 1812, though he supplied the North Malden church a part of the year.

In 1813, he was invited to Provincetown. The sea air was congenial with his enfeebled constitution. By the advice of the preachers in Boston, and the Presiding Elder of the District, and with the entire approbation of the Conference, he continued in that appointment during eleven years. Though this was a deviation from our usages, and liable to become a dangerous precedent, it was deemed on all hands expedient, under the circumstances of Mr. Kibby's health. His labors there were greatly successful; a most remarkable revival spread through the town, an account of which will hereafter be given in our sketch of that society.

Mr. Kibby re-entered the Itinerancy in 1823, and was appointed successively to New Bedford, Lynn Woodend, (two years and a third, as supernumerary,) Provincetown, two years, and Edgartown, two years. In the latter place, the greatest revival of religion ever known on Martha's Vineyard took place. It pervaded the whole community. In 1831, he was stationed at Ipswich, and in 1832–3, at Marblehead, where again he witnessed the displays of divine grace in the salvation of multitudes. Fifty-seven persons were converted in one week. The society was enlarged and all its interests strengthened. Mr. Kibby had been the first, and was now the last, to preach in the old chapel. A new one was finished during his present appointment to the town.

His subsequent appointments were Duxbury, Weston, (two years,) Weymouth, Dorchester, Charlestown and Newton. In 1841, he was returned among the superannuated, where he still remains, a veteran of our cause, full of years and honors. Mr. Kibby is tall, erect, and slight in person, extremely neat in dress, and venerable with age. His talents were of a very superior order. His imagination furnished him with vivid illustrations, always abundant, chaste, and appropriate. His reasoning was strikingly perspicuous, direct and conclusive. His language remarkable for both elegance and force. Though he never used notes in the pulpit, yet a large portion of his sermons were fully written — the cause, probably, of that rich and correct diction which so eminently characterized even his impromptu addresses. He has been a fond lover of good literature, and abounds in general knowledge. His judgment has always been cautious and safe, his zeal steady and effective, his attachment to the doctrines and economy of Methodism unwavering amidst many calls and temptations to more comfortable stations in other communions. Without ambition or pretension, he attained to a rare popularity as a preacher in the days of his vigor. He has accomplished distinguished service in the church, and is endeared to it, in most of New England, by precious recollections.

JOSHUA SOULE, though not named in the Minutes till the next year, began to travel about this time, under the Presiding Elder of Maine District, and therefore pertains to the present period. He occupies a distinguished position in our denominational history. He was born in Bristol, Hancock Co., Me., August 1, 1781. About 1795 his family removed to Avon, then a recent settlement on Sandy River; the Readfield Circuit extended to this remote frontier, and Enoch Mudge and other travelling evangelists occasionally penetrated to it, sounding the word of life among its sparse habitations. "The settlement," says Mr. Mudge,* "was new, and his father's house unfinished. Joshua had a precocious mind, a strong memory, a manly and dignified turn, although his appearance was exceedingly rustic." Youthful and untutored as he was, the doctrines of the gospel, as exhibited by the preachers of Methodism, arrested his attention and commended themselves to his opening intellect. He was awakened to a sense of his sinfulness and danger, and in June, 1797, after seeking reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, with a broken and contrite heart, he found peace in believing. The chivalric zeal and energy of the Methodist Itinerants who had brought the word of life to his distant home, found at once a responsive sympathy in his youthful heart, and was congenial with those habits of ad-venture and exertion to which his life in the wilderness had habituated him. He longed to share their heroic labors, and to go forth "into all the world" proclaiming the joyful sound of the gospel. The divine spirit selected and anointed him for signal achievements in the church; he felt that a dispensation of the word was committed to him, and that woe would be to him if he preached not the gospel. The excellent Joshua Taylor, who was Presiding Elder in Maine about this time, perceived beneath the rudeness and rusticity of his appearance those elements of ability and promise which have since distinguished his career, and encouraged him immediately to enter upon his ministerial labors. He was then (1798) but about seventeen years of age; an academy would doubtless have better befitted him, and would have guarantied a full repayment, in increased usefulness, for the delay required by a few years of study; but there was absolutely none within his reach, and indefatigable habits of application and observation were at least a partial substitute. He accompanied Mr. Taylor around the District, exhorting after his sermons, exciting general interest by his youth and devotion, and not a little by the contrast which he presented of rustic awkwardness with extraordinary though unpolished talents.

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*Letter to the Writer.

He was received at the next Conference, and appointed, with Timothy Merritt, to Portland Circuit. Mr. Merritt, still young and vigorous, was a congenial mind, thirsting alike for knowledge and holiness, and their reciprocal influence could not but be mutually profitable, so far as their continual travels and labors would admit. After tarrying one year more in Maine, during which he travelled a Circuit on Union River, he passed to Massachusetts, and was appointed in 1801, 1802, and 1803, respectively, to Sandwich, Needham and Nantucket. In 1804, he returned to his native

State, and travelled two years as Presiding Elder of the District of Maine. This was the only District in the Province at that period; he had, therefore, the oversight of the entire Methodist interest of that large section of New England. Thirteen Circuits were under his superintendence. His sermons at this time are reported to have been distinguished by that breadth of view and majesty of style which, in later years, notwithstanding some abatement through the variety of his responsibilities, have continued to mark with greatness his pulpit efforts. His word was oftentimes in resistless power, bearing down upon the large assemblies which collected to hear him, like the storm on the bending forest. He shared fully, during his Presiding Eldership in Maine, the privations and hardships of our early Itinerancy; long journeys on horseback, over new roads, through vast forests, in the storms of winter; fording dangerous streams, lodging in exposed log cabins, preaching almost daily, and receiving a pecuniary compensation scarcely sufficient for travelling expenses and clothing. These were the tests, however, which made strong men of the Methodist preachers of that day.

Such was the prosperity and extension of the District during these two years, that in 1806 it was divided, and its eastern portion formed into a new District, named after the Kennebec River, along which it chiefly extended. Mr. Soule took charge of the latter during 1806 and 1807. The following four years he travelled again the other section, then called Portland District. During this period Martin Ruter, Epaphras Kibby, Ebenezer Blake, Charles Virgin, Daniel Fillemore, Samuel Hillman and others of familiar name in our New England churches, were under his guidance; they had hard struggles but glorious victories in spreading the truth through the wilds of Maine. In 1812, Mr. Soule returned to Massachusetts, and was the colleague of Daniel Webb at

Lynn, but in the following year was back again, travelling his former District on the Kennebec. He continued there till 1816, when he was appointed Book Agent at New York; he did good service for the church in this capacity during four years, especially by the publication of the *Methodist Magazine*, the appearance of which, "even at this late period," says the historian of Methodism, "was hailed by the friends of literature and religion as the harbinger of brighter days to our Zion." Mr. Soule was its editor; his original articles were sensible in thought and dignified in style, though betraying often those minute intellectual defects which self education, however advantageous in other respects, seldom eradicates. Its selections were peculiarly attractive and instructive, and such was its success, that ten thousand subscribers were obtained the first year.

Dr. N. Bangs took Mr. Soule's place at the book rooms, in 1820, and the latter was stationed in New York city, where he labored two years with Aaron Hunt, B. Hibbard, Tobias Spicer, and John Summerfield. The following two years he spent in Baltimore, and in 1824 was elected to the Episcopacy in the forty-third year of his age, and the twenty-sixth of his ministry. For twenty-three years he has sustained the onerous responsibilities of that office, traversing the continent, from the Penobscot in Maine, to the Colorado in Texas, presiding in Conferences, visiting in long and perilous journies the Indian Missions, and faithfully laboring, by the many facilities of his position, for the promotion of our cause.

In the discussions of the General Conference of 1844, which resulted in the division of the church, he attached himself to the party formed by the representatives of the South, and has since identified himself with that section of the church, much to the regret, if not mortification of his northern brethren. The transactions of that body do not pertain to a local record like the present. We leave them and the just discrimination of the wrong or right of Bishop Soule's subsequent course, to the general history of the denomination.

Bishop Soule is erect, tall and slight in person, dignified in his bearing, but without proportionate polish in his manners. His face is weather-worn with travel, his forehead high but narrow, his voice strong and commanding. In the pulpit he is slow, long in his sermons — usually occupying an hour and a half for each — elaborate, almost entirely destitute of imagination or figurative illustrations, but strongly fortified in the main positions of his subject, and vigorous in his style. His discourses exhibit more breadth than depth, but are often overwhelmingly impressive. The dignity of his bearing, frequently verging on to majesty itself, gives to his sermons, at times, an imposing solemnity; but on occasions less congruous with it, has the disadvantage of appearing, to the fastidious at least, pompous and repulsive.

He has done great services and endured great privations for the church. New England Methodists, however they may regret his later measures, will ever recall him with gratitude and respect as one of their veteran pioneers and a noble son of their soil.

Elijah Bachelor was born in Sturbribge, Mass., of devout parents, who early trained him to the fear of God. At the age of sixteen he was converted, but through remissness in his spiritual duties, lost his evidence of the divine favor, and continued in a backslidden state during four years. Smitten deeply with the sense of his danger, he returned again to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, and sought and found reconciliation and peace with God. He soon after joined the Methodist Episcopal church, and entered the Itinerancy in 1798.

His first appointment was on Chesterfield Circuit, New Hampshire, a sphere of great labor and severe toils. During the ensuing four years, he travelled successively on Granville, (Mass.,) Litchfield, Middletown and Tolland, (Conn.,) Circuits. He located in 1804, but returned to the Itinerant ranks in 1808, and travelled five years more in New York, on Pompey, Cayuga, Scipio, and Seneca Circuits. He located at Homer, N. Y., in the Genesee Conference, in 1813. His health had been impaired by excessive fatigues in the ministry, yet he continued to labor diligently as a local preacher till his death, which took place on the 19th of December, 1821. During the last eight years of his life, he suffered much from rheumatism ; in the spring of 1820 he was attacked with distressing spasms, which continued to increase in violence till he expired. In his excruciating pains, he was supported by the consolations of the faith which he had so often preached to others. On the day of his departure he "spoke with calmness of death and eternity."[*] "*I am happy*," was the triumphant exclamation of the sufferer, in the midst of his agony, while his family wept around his bed, unable to rescue or relieve him. He was a man of the strictest "*moral and religious integrity*, pious and devout,"[†] a good preacher, of pleasant, conciliatory manners, and very successful in his ministrations. A charming voice in singing aided much his usefulness, especially in conducting social devotions. His talents as a preacher were considerably more than ordinary. His discourses were mostly hortative and often meltingly pathetic.

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[*] Meth. Mag., 1822.

[†] Ibid.

He was instant in season and out of season. Driven into a house in West Brookfield, by a transient rain-storm, he improved the opportunity to preach to those who were present; his word was in power; several were awakened, and among them, two who afterwards followed on his track in the Itinerant field of New England — Asa Kent and Joshua Crowell. Such is but a specimen of his promptness and usefulness. Many from New England have hailed him blessed in heaven as the instrument of their salvation.

Thus much respecting the laborers of the present ecclesiastical year: of their labors we know but little except the numerical results recorded in the Annual Minutes. Both Asbury and Lee were absent from New England, travelling together through the middle and southern States, during the whole interval between the Granville Conference of Sept., 1798, and that of New York, in June, 1799. The latter was attended by the eastern preachers, as there was no further session in New England till about the middle of 1800.

# CHAPTER XXXI.

## RESULTS OF THE YEAR.

Prosperity of the Year — Vergennes Circuit — Joseph Mitchell — Vermont — Massachusetts — Lorenzo Dow on Pittsfield Circuit — Maine—Aggregate Membership — Number of Methodists in each State — Tardy progress in Rhode Island — New Hampshire — Hostilities — An Example.

THE year had been prosperous, though not so generally as the preceding one. The new Circuit of Vergennes, in Vermont, which was projected at the Granville Conference, had been the scene of a wide spread reformation. Joseph Mitchell had gone over it like a "flame of fire." It comprehended all the State of Vermont, between the Green Mountains and Lake Champlain, and required incredible travels and labors. It was a field for an evangelical Hercules, and such was Joseph Mitchell. His ministrations were in power, his zeal never flagged; preaching night and day, travelling at the rate of nearly 6000 miles a year, and suffering indescribable privations, to which were superadded not a few instances of violent persecution, he overcame all obstacles and the word of life ran and was glorified through that wilderness region.

Hundreds were awakened, many of whom entered other churches, but at least 88 were received into classes, some of which he now formed for the first time.

The other Circuit in Vermont, (Vershire,) which included all the State east of the mountains, had also shared the divine influence. Under the arduous labors of Joseph Crawford 65 had been received in the societies, besides vast numbers who were awakened but had not yet joined the new communion.

Three new Circuits had been formed in this single State, viz: Essex, Windsor and Whitingham.* The former returned 110 members, the latter 55. Methodism had scattered its germs extensively through Vermont, and small classes, the nuclei of subsequent churches, had been formed in all directions.

Joseph Snelling had labored successfully on Martha's Vineyard. The number of Methodists on that island, though still small, was nearly doubled since the Granville Conference. He had also visited Nantucket during the year, and witnessed the conversion of many souls.

Great results had been reaped on Pittsfield Circuit. The eccentric but sincere Lorenzo Dow, who had been admitted to the ministry at Granville Conference and appointed to Cambridge Circuit, N. Y., was transferred during the year to Pittsfield. Notwithstanding his singularities he was remarkably successful; in many places he was repulsed by the societies, and refused the hospitalities of the families which usually entertained the Circuit preachers; but his unwearied labors produced in time a profound impression. He sometimes rode more than fifty miles, and preached five sermons, besides leading several classes, in a single day. The astonished people, witnessing his sincerity and usefulness, soon treated him more respectfully, and a general revival ensued. In Pittsfield, where at first he received no invitation to their homes, he says, "I visited it extensively, and had the satisfaction to see the Methodists and others stirred up to serve God. Now they offered me presents, which I refused, saying, the next preachers invite home and treat well, for my sake. In Alford," he says, in his characteristic style, "I preached Methodism, inside and outside. Many came to hear; one woman thought I aimed at her dress. The next meeting she ornamented far more, in order that I might speak to her. But I, in my discourse, took no notice of dress, and she went away disgraced and ashamed. The brethren here treated me very cold at first, so I was necessitated to pay for my horse-keeping for five weeks: and being confined a few days with the ague and fever, the man of the house not being a Methodist, I paid him for my accommodation. I had said in public that God would bless my labors there; which made the people watch me for evil and not for good. I visited the whole neighborhood from house to house, which made a great uproar among the people. However, the fire kindled; the society got enlivened, and several others who were stumbling at the unexemplary walk of professors, were convinced and brought to find the realities of religion for themselves. When leaving this place, I was offered pay for my expenses, but I refused it, saying, if you wish to do me good, treat the coming preachers better than you have done me. Stockbridge: here the minister of the place had done his endeavors to influence the people to shut the preachers out of the town; but by an impression I went into one part, and by an invitation to another; and though the opposition was great from the magistrates, yet they found no way to expel us out of the place; but the revival began, and several were stirred up to seek God. Now the doctrine of reprobation lost ground: the eyes of many were enlightened to see a free salvation offered to all mankind. In Lenox the society and people were much prejudiced at first, but the former were quickened afresh."

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* Journals, page 59.

This eccentric man left the Circuit in a state of universal prosperity; 180 had been added to the societies, and about 500 more were under conviction for sin. The sensation was wonderful, and some, to this day, stand up in the church as witnesses of his usefulness. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of man."

Extensive reformations had prevailed in Maine. Timothy Merritt had labored successfully on Portland Circuit. Great numbers had been awakened, and nearly 60 received into the infant societies. On Kennebec Circuit, Roger Searle witnessed still greater displays of divine grace, and had gathered into the church 91 new members. Peter Jane had the satisfaction to report 73 from Pleasant River, the first returns from that Circuit.

The aggregate of members, in all the New England States, was 4954, and the increase of the year was about 800 — more than two thirds of the increase of the entire denomination. The following was the distribution of the membership, as recorded in the Annual Minutes: Connecticut, 1497; Rhode Island, 196; Massachusetts, 1409; Vermont, 604; New Hampshire, 131; Maine, 1117.

The gains of the year were chiefly in Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts. In the first they amounted to 181, in the second to 317, and in the last to 215. Rhode Island still lingers tardily in the rear. It returns but 196 members — a gain of only 34 during the year — a declension of 12 from the number reported four years before. About seven years had passed since the first regular appointment was made in that State, and but three since Nicholas Snethen travelled the first Circuit in Vermont, yet the former scarcely reports 200 members, while the latter returns 604. Local and traditional influences obstructed and still somewhat obstruct the progress of vital religion in Rhode Island. Lee noticed the fact; at a later date he remarks: "It is almost twenty years since we first began to preach in Rhode Island, and at present we have only four or five hundred members in that State. We have had as little success in that place, as in any of the States where we have been; yet we have not as much opposition there, as we have commonly had in most places; neither are the people as much prejudiced against us and our plan, as they are in the rest of the New England States." A better day has dawned on that interesting State, and it promises to become a fertile soil for Methodism.

New Hampshire, though now overspread with Methodists, also gave a reluctant admission to its hardy Itinerants. But one Circuit had yet been formed in the State. Three years had passed since Philip Wager entered it as the first Methodist preacher regularly sent thither. Elijah Bachelor reported the present year but one hundred and thirty-one Methodists within its limits, a gain of but nine since the last returns, and of but sixty-three in three years. Methodism had to struggle into that State. Long rides, bad roads, hard fare, exposure to the weather by night in log cabins, to perils by day in fording creeks and rivers, were not the only trials to which the laborious preachers were subjected. They were generally assailed by other sects, and sometimes by the mob. One of them* has furnished the following example.

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* Rev. Asa Kent.

The imprisonment heretofore mentioned of several Methodists of Wilbraham, at the instigation of the parish incumbent, Rev. Mr. W——, had reacted most unfavorably. His people were vexed with hearing, "Your minister sent the Methodists to jail!" and it was judged best for *him to go away*. Resolved to escape from these troublers of his Israel, he travelled between two and three hundred miles northward, and had just settled in the pleasant town of Lancaster, N. H., when lo! the "Philistines were upon him again." This seemed beyond endurance. There was a saying among the alarmed inhabitants of the country, that "wherever the Methodists get foothold, they will hold on;" and *here* it was judged safest to prevent their getting foothold, by violence, if need be. It was generally supposed that the minister knew of the intended mob, if he did not assist in planning it.

There was no Circuit formed in this country nearer than Vershire, Vt.; but the preachers had made a few excursions up the river. A man by the name of Rosebrook Crawford, a zealous exhorter, or local preacher, who had joined the church in one of the lower towns, had returned to that county, (where his father lived,) and held meetings wherever he could find places. He engaged John Langdon, of Vershire, a local preacher, a worthy citizen, and magistrate in his own county, to take a tour of appointments, and attended him as his guide. He had preached in the evening in Lancaster, and mounted his horse to go to "Father Bredin's," of precious memory, who had belonged to the Wesleyans in Ireland, and at that time lived in Lunenburg, Vt. A man seized his horse by the bit, and others gathering around, said, "Lead on." Others caught Mr. Crawford, and thrusting him into a sleigh, went forward. Mr. Langdon said, "What do you mean by such conduct?" "We are going to have you examined by our minister, to see if you are qualified to preach," said they, but went directly to the tavern. The toddy-stick was in motion, and the red-hot loggerhead hissed in the flip. They sported as life increased. Mr. L. opened a door, and found the landlord in the next room, and was soon convinced that he was well pleased with the state of things. The former sat in deep thought, while they drank to their hearts' content, when orders were given, "Get ready." Two men came in and ordered Mr. L. to follow them. He sternly replied, "I am not going with you." "Then we will take you," was their reply; as they went towards him, he arose, and stepping behind his chair, began to address them: "I have put my life in jeopardy, and fought for the liberty of my country, and my *rights* as a freeman and citizen no man shall wrest from me," &c., and proceeded to give them a warm exhortation. Hearing a loud voice, they came from the bar-room to see what was going on. There stood a tall, stout man, with his chair before him in preaching style, and speaking *strong words*, with a sharp eye and determined countenance. He spared not the landlord, who was a church-member, nor his company, while he pointed them to the day of final retribution. They had mistaken their man; and after a short consultation, one cried out, "We have got one, let *him* go;" and poor Crawford was at their mercy, as they rode off in high glee. When they came to the river, they had a little ceremony in carrying him across. By means of a thaw there was water on the ice, and as he had been so *warmly* exhorting and praying for them on the way, they concluded that he *needed cooling*. He was a perfect non-resistant, and they laid him upon his back, and drew him by his hands until his clothes were well saturated. They brought him to the Vermont shore, gave three cheers — good riddance of the Methodist for ever — and returned in triumph. All the best citizens felt themselves scandalized by such base conduct, and denounced the mob without ceremony. However, the minister thought it his duty to prepare a discourse, and set forth the doctrines, characters, and conduct of the Methodists, as he was so well acquainted with them. Whether it was to *excuse* or *justify* the mob, or from a *sincere desire* to warn the people against danger, is not for us to say. Report said that he showed the sermon to one of his brethren, a missionary, who advised him not to preach it, as he would thereby greatly injure himself. He thought otherwise, and began to preach. Soon he appeared to be troubled: his head was affected with giddiness, and his sight failed. Being sick and faint, two men led him from the house in blindness. For want of sight he did not attempt to preach for months afterward, and never preached much more.

Similar scenes were not uncommon in Vermont and New Hampshire. The hardy settlers of these wilderness regions, chose a more summary, but less vexatious method of suppressing the new sect than their more staid and more obstinate neighbors of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The latter imprisoned, seized property, anathematized from the pulpit, and did so with most patient pertinacy for years, while the former shook their fists and swore terribly against the intruders on one day, and on the next were weeping and falling as dead men under their preaching. New Hampshire has since become a fruitful field of Methodism. More than ten thousand of her citizens are now embodied in its societies.

# CHAPTER XXXII.

## CONFERENCE OF 1799.

Session of the Conference — New Circuits — Appointments — Preachers — Elijah Sabin — His Ministerial History — Trials — Death — Character — Elijah Hedding — His Conversion — Ministerial Labors — Sufferings — Character.

As no Conference had been appointed for the eastern States the present year, the preachers in New England assembled in the session at New York, June 19, 1799. Asbury and Lee, returning from the southern Conferences, arrived in the city on Saturday, 15th. They preached there the next day. " It is an unseasonable day for religion," said the latter; " it is time the Conference should come; may Almighty God bless and own their labors to the people." The session was opened on Wednesday the 19th, " for New York and all the New England States," says Asbury; " it was crowded with work; consequently I had but little rest, and what added to my pain, was brother Bostwick's laying sick in the next room — heat and haste!" Lee preached the ordination sermon, from Acts 14: 22: " Confirming the souls of the preachers, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, for we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." "This," says Snelling, who attended it, "was a very harmonious and agreeable Conference. Some of the oldest and ablest preachers were present, and the preaching was spiritual and powerful. One evening, towards the close of the Conference, we had a meeting in the Bowery meeting-house. After preaching, it began to thunder and lighten and rain very powerfully, so that the people could not conveniently leave the house. Brother M'Clasky called upon brother Brodhead and myself to sing a spiritual song. We began to sing, 'We 've found the Rock, the travellers cried,' &c. This had a peculiar effect upon the people; for before we got through the hymn there was shouting in every part of the house; also several were in distress of mind for their souls. Although the storm had subsided, the people would not leave the house. I staid till eleven o'clock, and then left them. We often see in our meetings the powerful and salutary effects of singing." *

Lee says a large number of preachers were present, and that they brought "pleasing accounts from their respective Circuits, of a gracious work of God amongst the people."

On Thursday the usual examination of character took place. "I was thankful," writes Lee, "to find that they had generally adorned the gospel in their lives and conversation." The session closed on Saturday morning, and the same day most of the preachers were *en route* to their appointments, some to neighboring Circuits, others to remote parts of Canada and Maine; some with aching hearts, oppressed with anxieties respecting the trials that awaited not themselves only, but their wives and little ones, others with buoyant courage, "rejoicing in tribulation," and hopeful of new victories to be won for the truth.

Some of them tarried over the Sabbath, " when," says Asbury, " we had a charitable day at all the houses, and collected nearly three hundred dollars; but the deficiencies of the preachers were almost one thousand dollars."

Five new appointments were reported from New England at this Conference — four Circuits and one station, viz: *Essex*, *Whitingham* and *Windsor*, in Vermont; *Merrimac* and *Nantucket*, in Massachusetts. Merrimac Circuit was chiefly in Massachusetts, and lay along the river after which it was named. Essex was the northern section of Vergennes Circuit, extended and detached; it was afterwards called Fletcher Circuit. Whitingham Circuit was formed of that part of Pittsfield Circuit, which lay within Vermont. Windsor Circuit extended from the town of that name on the Connecticut River into the heart of the State.

The following were the appointments made, at the New York Conference, for New England:

Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder; Portland*, Timothy Merritt, Joshua Soule; *Readfield*, John Brodhead, Nathan Emory; *Kennebec*, Asa Heath; *Bath* and *Union*, John Finnegan, Comfort C. Smith; *Penobscot River*, Reuben Hubbard. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder; Warren* and *Greenwich*, Ezekiel Canfield; Joshua Hall, Truman Bishop; *Sandwich*, Reuben Jones; *Martha's Vineyard*, Daniel Webb; *Provincetown*, William Beauchamp; *Boston*, Joshua Wells; *Lynn* and *Marblehead*, Andrew Nichols; *Needham*, Stephen Hull, Elijah R. Sabin; *Merrimac*, Ralph Williston; *Nantucket*, Joseph Snelling.

Shadrack Bostwick, *Presiding Elder; Tolland*, Daniel Ostrander; *New London*, Lawrence M'Coombs, Abner Wood; *Pomfret*, William Thatcher; *Chesterfield*, John Nichols; *Vershire* and *Windsor*, Joseph Crawford, Elijah Chichester.

On the New York District were, also, the following New England appointments: — *Vergennes*, Joseph Mitchell, Joseph Sawyer; *Essex*, Lorenzo Dow; *Pittsfield*, Daniel Brumley; *Whitingham*, Peter Vannest; *Granville*, Peter Jane, Elijah Bachelor; *Litchfield*, Augustus Jocelyn; *Redding*, David Brown; *Middletown*, Ebenezer Stevens.

Methodism comprised, then, in New England, at the close of the tenth year of its labors there, *three* Districts and a large portion of a fourth, above *thirty Circuits*, more than *forty* preachers, and about *five thousand* members; the average increase of its Circuits had been about *three* per year, of its preachers *four*, of its members, *five hundred.*

The number of preachers appointed for the first time to New England the present year, amounted to twelve; half of these commenced this year their Itinerant ministry; it seemed, indeed, to be the policy of Asbury to send young men into the East, (under superior leaders, however,) that they might be tested and strengthened for the future by the peculiar trials which beset the Itinerancy in this section of the country. These stern tests either drove them into other ministries for easier positions, as was the case with Rainor, Allen, Hill, Hubbard, the Hulls and others, or converted them into evangelical heroes, like Roberts, Mills, Mudge, Pickering, Taylor, Brodhead, and Ostrander.

One of the most distinguished among the Itinerants who entered New England for the first time the present year, was Elijah R. Sabin — still a familiar and beloved name — a man of great virtues, great talents and great sorrows. We are indebted to one of his friends and fellow-laborers for the following notes of his life

"I think he was born in Connecticut, but his father moved to the western part of Vermont when he was young. He gave me an account of his travels under the direction of the

Presiding Elder, in the western part of Vermont, in 1798. On one occasion he came very near losing his life; it was as follows: — A man lived near one of his appointments who was violently opposed to the Methodists — though his wife was one of them. The preachers had called several times at his house, which only increased his rage, and he swore bitterly that he would horsewhip the next that entered his door. Mr. Sabin heard of the threat, but did not believe the Lord would permit him to be injured. Thinking it his duty to go, he went, and was conversing with the lady, when her husband approached in a rage, and with the but end of a whip-stock struck him upon his head, felling him to the floor. He attempted to rise, but was struck down a second time, and so stunned that he hardly realized, for a short time, what took place. The infuriated man would probably have dispatched him, but by a gracious providence a neighbor, knowing Mr. Sabin had gone there, and seeing the husband (whose threats he knew) hastening to the house, hastened also, and was just in time to interpose and save his life. It was some time before he wholly recovered from his wounds, and he carried the scar to his grave. Mr. Sabin had imbibed the notion of *non-resistance* and concluded that if Christians would do their duty faithfully the Lord would take care of them. He told me he might have warded off the first blow if he had tried, and perhaps have wrenched the instrument from his opponent's hand; but he doubted whether the latter would strike him; he declared, however, that he should never be beat thus again without an attempt to defend himself. In 1799, he was received into the New York Conference, and stationed at Needham, in the New England Conference, Mass. Brother Sabin was laborious and zealous; rather more than some were pleased to have him. There was one village which he passed, and where he tried in vain to get a house to preach in. At last he appointed a meeting under a tree, to be held at his next round; but the sons of Belial were there with drum and fife, and beat the roll so violently that he was compelled to give it up, and retire. This his colleague brought against him at the Conference, in 1800. Bishop Asbury heard the accusation through, and replied to this effect, 'I am glad to learn the brother has *zeal*, and is willing to preach out of doors, if he cannot find open doors. This was the way Methodist preachers began, and we need warm hearts to carry the work forward.' In 1800, he was appointed to Landaff Circuit, Vt. This was then included within the New York Conference, and it was some time, as he told me, before he could find any one who could tell him in what part of the world it might be discovered. He found a small class in Landaff, formed, I think, by Joseph Crawford; he went to work, and such was the blessing of God upon his labors, that he reaped an harvest of souls, and returned at Conference one hundred and ninety-two in society. Mr. Sabin was the apostle of this upper part of New Hampshire."*

He continued on Landaff Circuit two years. His labors and exposures there prostrated his health, and in 1802 he was returned among the supernumeraries. In 1804, he located, but on partially regaining his health, in 1805, he took charge of the Vermont District, which he travelled two years, with Elijah Hedding, Philip Munger, Joel Steele, Asa Kent, Oliver Beale, and other similar men under him. In 1807, he was appointed Presiding Elder of New London District, which comprehended Rhode Island, large portions of Connecticut and Massachusetts, and reached into New Hampshire. After laboring on this extensive District two years, he was sent to Boston as colleague of Philip Munger. He continued there two years and was appointed, in 1811, as supernumerary to Boston and Marblehead, with Elijah Hedding and Erastus Otis. His feeble health again sunk under his labors, and in 1812 he was compelled to retire into the local ranks. He removed to the Penobscot River, where he continued till 1817, when, his health rapidly declining, he was advised by physicians to try the effect of a southern climate; he went to Augusta, Ga., where, after lingering a number of weeks with pulmonary consumption, he died in the triumps of faith. About one month before his decease, he addressed a letter to his brethern of the New England Conference through the venerated Bishop George, in which he said: "O, how sweet is the love of God in the midst of affliction! O, brethren, come magnify the lord with me, come let us exalt his name together! God has been pleased, of late, to lead my mind into a state of divine composure and calmness; by which, in some degree, I feel my will sunk into his, and am more and more disposed to resign all into his hands, even for life or death.— Such was my situation by spasms in the stomach, for several hours, that I thought seriously of going suddenly into the presence of my Judge; but I was not terrified — peace had its residence in the soul. Forever praised be the name of our God! I'll praise him while he lends me breath! — I leave these lines as my best, and perhaps my last pledge of love, addressed to my fathers and brethren of the New England Conference."

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* Letter of Rev. A. Kent to the Writer.

The Rev. S. Dunwody, who was then stationed in Augusta, and attended the last moments of this devoted man, thus describes the closing scene of his laborious and afflicted life: "On Monday, April 28, he said he had a calm confidence in God, but not such a sense of the divine fullness as he wished. In the meantime his bodily strength was so far exhausted that he could scarcely speak above a whisper; about sunset he obtained an uncommon manifestation of divine love. He broke out in praising God in such a manner as astonished all around him; his strength of voice was increased so as to be heard all over the house. 'This,' said he, 'is worth praying for.' One of his expressions was, '*If this be dying, it is very pleasant dying.*' To a number of us who stood round his bedside, he said, he would not exchange his situation for the healthiest among us. Next morning he asked the time of day, and being told it was half past eight, he said he hoped to be in heaven by twelve. His life, however, was prolonged a few days more. On Saturday night he slept tolerably well, till about half past one o'clock; he was then waked up with coughing, which threatened immediate suffocation. About daylight he breathed easier, but his end visibly approached. Feeling himself drawing very near to eternity, he was heard to say, 'O, the pain, the bliss of dying!' and in a few minutes his happy spirit took its flight to that rest that remains for the people of God."

Such was the end of Elijah R. Sabin. He was above the ordinary height, very erect and slender, with a highly intellectual forehead and a brilliant eye. "A pleasant smile," says our correspondent, "played upon his countenance while in conversation or in preaching, except when he spoke of God's abhorrence of sin and the fearful doom which awaits the ungodly — then his countenance told that the subject pressed upon his soul. He excelled in pathetic appeals. When his heart overflowed with pity for sinners, and he became ardent in exhortation, his voice became soft and plaintive, and he fell into a kind of *tone* peculiarly his own, a flow of words well chosen fell from his lips, and every feature and gesture combined to impress the hearers with deep interest — a stoic only could remain without emotion. He had a very discriminating mind — he well understood our doctrines, and was powerful in controversy. Calvinistic sophistries withered before him. He was a man of great faith, and was very powerful in prayer; he helped me much on the subject of faith. On one occasion a society was nearly equally divided by a discord, and two class leaders led the parties; much jealousy and surmising had increased the alienation, and much labor for harmony had been spent in vain. Mr. Sabin got them together and told them they must carry the matter to God in earnest prayer — that each must pray, and carry his case into the presence of a holy God, &c. He prayed, and called on others to pray — and they prayed again and again, until the Spirit descended, and one (if not both) of the leaders of the parties fell to the floor — the room was full of the glory of God — they began to confess, to weep and to pray the Lord to forgive them. In this way harmony was restored, without their ever talking over the matter."

In addition to his great labors and ill health, Mr. Sabin had to sustain through the latter portion of his life the more intolerable burden of domestic wretchedness; he was tried in the fire, but was purified by the trial, and after a troubled and weary pilgrimage, escaped safely to the repose of heaven, as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Elijah Hedding, though his name does not appear in the Minutes till a later date, commenced travelling this year by the direction of the Presiding Elder, and therefore comes under our present notice. He was born in Duchess Co., N. Y., but removed with his parents, at about his tenth year, to Starkesboro', Vt. The Methodist Itinerants had not yet penetrated thither, but an aged Methodist and his wife — a mother in Israel — had removed to that town from Connecticut, and, though remote from any members of their chosen communion, and several miles from any church whatever, they let their light so shine that their neighbors saw their good works and glorified their father which is in heaven. The church is indebted for the services of this distinguished veteran of its ministry, to the instrumentality of the elect lady alluded to. Meetings were opened in her humble dwelling two or three years before the arrival of our preachers. There was no one in the neighborhood, at first, capable of praying in public, except herself and her husband, who was a devoted man of moderate abilities. They induced young Hedding, then about 16 years old, to assist them in their Sabbath services. Though uninterested in religion, he consented to read a sermon every Sabbath to the assembled neighbors — the good man of the house beginning and concluding the exercises with singing and prayer. The latter was abundantly furnished with Wesley's works and other Methodistic publications ; by his public Sabbath readings, the youthful Hedding became thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines of Methodism, and was so struck with their evangelical richness and practical appropriateness, that he soon read all the other books in the cottage of the pious couple. He has been heard to say since, that this was the best theological training he ever enjoyed. His first permanent religious impressions were produced by the conversations of the Christian matron mentioned. She perceived his promising talents, and strong moral susceptibility. Devoting herself to the task of leading him to God, and hoping that he might be providentially called to important services in the church, she conversed with him frequently on subjects of religion, and succeeded at last in awakening in his mind a deep concern for his spiritual safety. About this time the old Vergennes Circuit was formed, and took in the town of Starkesboro' ; Joseph Mitchell, a man mighty in word and in doctrine, opportunely visited the place. Young Hedding heard him preach — his convictions were deepened, and as he returned to his home, he retired into a forest, and, kneeling down by a large tree, covenanted with God to live and die in his service, whatever might be the sacrifice involved in the resolution. Soon after, he heard Mr. Mitchell again; the discourse was one of remarkable power; it disclosed to him, in a manner he had never yet perceived, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the peril of the unrenewed soul. He was now seized with unutterable anxiety, and for several weeks sought after God with anguish and tears, night and day; divine truth shone forth upon his conscience in all its reality, and he trembled under the sense of his sinfulness and danger. Such, usually, are the profound convictions and spiritual travail of those whom God designs for important purposes in his church.

He looked with longing solicitude for the next visit of the Itinerant evangelist; he arrived and preached in the house where the youthful penitent had been accustomed to read the sermons of Wesley. After the discourse, a class-meeting was held, as usual, by the preacher; on ascertaining the deep convictions of young Hedding, he proposed that special prayer should be made in his behalf; the man of God and the pious cottagers bowed around him, and continued in supplication, till the light of God's reconciled countenance broke upon his troubled spirit. He was brought up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and a new song was put into his mouth, even praise to God. This joyful day in his history was the 27th of December, 1798.

It was not long before he was licensed to exhort, and in about a year was sent by the Presiding Elder on to Essex Circuit, Vt., to supply the place of the eccentric Lorenzo Dow, who, after travelling and laboring with incredible diligence, had departed under a supposed divine impression to preach in Ireland. He continued about three months on that Circuit, exhorting, without a text, at all the appointments, holding a public meeting and leading a class daily. His word was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power — revivals broke out around the Circuit, and many were added to the Lord. He soon after received license as a local preacher, and was sent by the Presiding Elder to Plattsburgh Circuit, N. Y., whence he was transferred in about six weeks to Cambridge Circuit, to supply the place of a disabled preacher. On both these Circuits, extensive revivals attended his labors. At the Conference of 1801, he was received on probation, and despatched again to Plattsburgh. It was a vast Circuit, requiring about three hundred miles of travel monthly, with daily public labors. It reached from Ticonderoga on the south, to beyond the Canada line on the north, meandering extensively to the right and left, and the laborious Itinerant was compelled to swim streams, traverse forests on new and rough roads, and sleep in log cabins through which the rain and snow often beat upon him in his bed. Many of the settlements were recent, and in some of them the gospel had never been preached before. The settlers thronged to hear the word, and the Spirit of God attended it. A flame of divine influence spread through the Circuit, and hosts were reclaimed from their sins and gathered into the church. In 1802, he was appointed to Fletcher Circuit, another vast field of labor, extending from Onion River, Vt., on the south, to fifteen or twenty miles beyond the Canada line, and including the settlements east of Lake Champlain and west of the Green Mountains. Here he had to travel three hundred miles a month, preach once, and often twice daily, besides attending classes and prayer-meetings. His colleague was Henry Ryan — "a brave Irishman," says our authority, a man who labored as if the judgment thunders were to follow each sermon. The route of the Circuit was in the form of the figure eight. The two preachers usually met at the point of intersection, when Ryan, hastily saluting his young fellow laborer, would exclaim as he passed, "Drive on! drive on! brother, let us drive the devil out of the land" — a rough but significant expression of the tireless energy which characterized the Itinerant ministry of that day. Here, likewise, were encountered all the privations and exposures of a recent country — bad roads, long drives in wintry storms, and through forests bound in ice, and sleepless nights spent in log cabins, through which the winds whistled and the snow pelted. More serious trials attended them and their successors in this region; while many of the settlers were hungry for the word of life, and welcomed them as the men who showed the way of salvation; others, perverted by their long privation of religious influences, persued them with relentless persecutions. In some places Hedding was hooted and threatened in the streets; Dow was struck in the face, Abner Wood was horsewhipped, and Elijah Sabin severely wounded on the head, by the butt end of a whip, as we have noticed. Still they prevailed; their persecutors were often marvellously awakened, multitudes received them joyfully, and gladly shared the reproach of the cross, and now peaceful and prosperous churches are spread all over that region — the fruits of the toils and sufferings of Hedding and his co-laborers.

In 1803, he was sent to Bridgewater Circuit, N. H., which comprized 13 towns, and required 100 miles travel per week, two sermons usually a day, and three on the Sabbath. Here he had no colleague, but bore the burden alone. A most remarkable revival attended his labors, intense interest spread throughout the Circuit, hundreds were awakened, and it seemed that the whole population were about to turn unto God by repentance. Excited, himself, by the general interest and unaided by a fellow-laborer, he exerted himself beyond his strength, and in the midst of his labors he was smiten down by disease from which he has never recovered. He was unable to turn himself in bed, or lift food to his lips during six weeks, and more than four months passed before he could walk across his chamber; he resumed, however, his work, and the remainder of the year went around the Circuit, preaching as he had strength, and gathering the fruits of his former labors. He formed during this year many new societies, which are still thriving. In 1804, he was on Hanover Circuit, N. H. The next year he was present at the Lynn Conference, and was ordained Elder by Bishop Asbury, at a public service in a neighboring woods. He shared in the usual public labors of the session, during which great displays of the spirit of God were witnessed, scores were awakened, some fell as dead men to the earth, many cried aloud with anguish, while others wept in silence or rejoiced with thanksgiving for the pardon of their sins. A great noise went abroad, and hundreds flocked to witness the scene; the rabble raged and made threatening demonstrations, but the power of the word prevailed against all opposition; the multitudes bowed before it as the forest under the whirlwind, and even late at night, after continual labors during the day, Mr. Hedding was called up from his sleep to pray with and counsel the broken hearted ones who still lingered on their knees, determined, like Jacob, to wrestle till the break of day for the divine mercy. Many old Methodists still recall that remarkable occasion.

From this Conference he was sent to Barre Circuit, Vt., with Dan Young. Here again he had a vast field of travel and toil, preaching in 20 towns and riding about 300 miles every four weeks with daily services. Gracious revivals prevailed in various parts of the Circuit, and to many aged saints living within its range the name of Hedding is still precious, as the guide of their youthful feel into the path of life. He had a faithful colleague this year; they met every fortnight at Montpelier, the centre of the Circuit, where they preached in presence of each other the same day. By an arrangement made for their mutual improvement, each took note of the defects of the other's sermon, and afterwards discussed them in the spirit of kindness and confidence. This confidential arrangement extended subsequently to all the faults they heard ascribed to each other, and finally to all that they themselves mutually perceived or supposed. The common sufferings of Methodist preachers in those days, and the little opportunity they had amidst their vast labors for self improvment, rendered such frankness frequent and desirable.

In 1806, Mr. Hedding travelled the Vershire Circuit, Vt. During this year, his prudence was called into exercise and tested by a remarkable occurrence. The disposition to emigrate to Ohio infected that whole section of the country. It became a species of mania, and *every official* member of the Circuit departed to the west about the same time, leaving it without a single Local Preacher, Trustee, Steward or Leader. The church, through the whole series of towns comprized in the Circuit, was thus suddenly left without a single officer, and the vacant posts had to be as suddenly filled by new appointments. Mr. Hedding's discrimination was, however, found adequate to the singular exigency. He selected judicious and efficient men, and no inconvenience ensued. In 1807, he was appointed Presiding Elder of New Hampshire District, which included the entire extent of the State, except a small fragment about Portsmouth that pertained to the Boston District. His labors this year were Herculean, involving at least three thousand miles of travel and a daily public service, besides the usual and perplexing ecclesiastical business of the office; such, too, was the poverty of the infant churches on the District, that at the end of the year his aggregate receipts for salary, besides travelling expenses, was $4.25. The provision for the preachers under him was proportionately small, for no estimate of "Table expenses," was made in those days of destitution, and most of the preachers were single men. Nevertheless, they were sustained with the divine blessing upon their souls and upon their labors; while they shared the poverty of the people, they partook with them, also, of "Angels' food!" Gracious revivals prevailed through the District, the Quarterly Meetings were occasions of great gatherings, and often of marvellous displays of the grace of God. The foundations were laid, by these suffering and laborious men, for the numerous and more competent societies which are now scattered over New Hampshire. He continued two years on this District, and saw Methodism extended vastly in the State.

In 1809, he was removed to New London District, which he travelled two years. It extended from Long Island Sound to New Hampshire, and from the Connecticut River to Narragansett Bay, R. I., and Needham, Mass. Several camp-meetings were held within it during those two years, and were remarkably successful. One particularly, at Hebron, Conn., was attended by an large concourse, about three thousand people being present constantly, many from great distances. The preaching of the word was distinguished by extraordinary effects. It was estimated by Mr. Hedding himself, that, under one sermon "five hundred persons fell to the earth as if shot, in five minutes." The excitement was resistless, and many sober-minded Christians, who had always opposed such scenes, were smitten down and lay insensible for hours. The fruits of those great occasions are still scattered through New England. During the following four years he was stationed, respectively, at Boston, Nantucket and Lynn — at the latter two years.

In the years 1815–16 he again labored in Boston, with Daniel Fillemore. This was a critical period in the history of Methodism in that city — the darkest day that ever lowered over it. After unparalleled struggles, the society had succeeded, at a large expense, in erecting the Bromfield Street Chapel. The disastrous effects of the war on business, frustrated their fiscal plans, and left them with insupportable incumbrances. A sum of eighteen thousand dollars must be raised within a limited time, or their property be forfeited. The embarrassment seemed inextricable, and as one Board of Trustees held both houses, it was the general anticipation that all the Methodists of Boston would be "turned out of doors" and left without a sanctuary to meet in. But at this critical juncture the generosity and business talent of Colonel Amos Binney, together with the exertions of their pastors, provided deliverance for them. The former, who was conducting an extensive and varied business, pledged himself that if the latter would sell on credit a number of pews, equivalent in value to the debt, he would accept the notes of the purchasers, allow them to be paid in work, according to their respective business, and pay down at once the necessary sum of eighteen thousand dollars. Messrs. Hedding and Fillemore applied themselves to the task incessantly for several months, interceding with every one they met, from whom they could expect assistance, and at last, by extraordinary exertions, procured the necessary number of purchasers. The latter held a public meeting at the chapel, signed their notes, the requisite sum was munificently paid down by Colonel Binney, and the chapels of Methodism in Boston saved.

The work of God advanced gradually, but surely, in the city, during this period. Many were awakened and converted, and the doctrine of Christian Sanctification, especially, struck deep root in the societies. Many bright examples of it were raised up.

The next year he was appointed to Portland District, and is so reported in the Minutes, but owing to his enfeebled health the appointment was changed to Portland city. The ensuing three years he was at Lynn (two years) and New London. In 1821, he took charge of Boston District, but his health was not sufficient for its great labors. The pulmonary and rheumatic affections he had contracted by exposures and excessive labors on Bridgewater Circuit, N. H., still affected him, and not a day or night has passed for forty-four years, in which he has not been reminded, by more or less pain, of those days of toil and suffering. He was compelled to retire from the District at the close of the year, and was returned to the city of Boston, where he labored two years, and in 1824 was elevated to the Episcopacy. The remainder of his life will form an important chapter in the history of the church, but it does not come within the compass of a local work like the present. He had his full share of the extraordinary labors which devolve on our Episcopal office. The whole nation has been his diocese. He has stood firmly at his post in days of strife and peril, and has aided in conducting the church through exigencies which have made the stoutest hearts tremble. From the time that he commenced proclaiming the truth in the wilds of New Hampshire and Canada, he has never wavered in the hope that God designed Methodism for enduring and universal triumphs, and would bring it forth with but hardier strength from its trials; this hope is still unabated in his hoary age, and he is preparing to depart from his earthly labors with tranquil confidence in the destiny of the cause to which he has given a long life of privation and toil.

Bishop Hedding is tall, stout, and dignified in person; his locks are white with age, his face remarkable for its benign and intelligent expression, and his *tout ensemble* most venerable and impressive. His manners are marked by the most perfect simplicity and ease. In the pulpit he is always perspicuous, lucid and instructive. His discourses are precisely arranged, delivered moderately, in a style of extreme simplicity, and frequently with passages of affecting pathos. He has been distinguished for his accuracy in the doctrines and discipline of Methodism, the exact discrimination of his judgment, the extraordinary tenacity of his memory, the permanence of his friendships and his invariable prudence.

# CHAPTER XXXIII.

## CONCLUSION.

Lee and Asbury return to the East — Prosperity of the Year — Condition of the Circuits — Controversy in Maine — Great Progress in Vermont — Lorenzo Dow — Elijah Hedding — Number of Methodists in the New England States — Conclusion.

LEE was appointed at the New York Conference, to labor in that city, but accompanied Asbury again through the Middle and southern States, superintending the churches, assisting in the Conferences, and preaching with his usual frequency. As the time for the New England Conference of 1800 approached, he returned to the Eastern States, and made a rapid flight through most of them, delivering his message once more before he took a permanent leave of them. Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat also entered New England about this time, on their way to the Lynn Conference; they passed on rapidly, preaching constantly. They reached Lynn by the 17th, the day before the Conference.

The ecclesiastical year 1799–1800 included thirteen months, and had been attended with gratifying prosperity. Beauchamp and Snelling had spread the doctrines of Methodism through most of the towns of Cape Cod. Rhode Island, so complacent to and yet so tardy in the new movement, had received a strong impulse under the unremitting labors of Canfield, Hall and Bishop. Instead of one Circuit it now reported two; a new one had been formed, called Rhode Island. Many souls had been awakened on Greenwich and Warren Circuit, more than thirty of whom had been gathered into the church. Considerable impression had been made on Connecticut, especially on the New London Circuit. The tireless Lawrence McCoombs, combating opposition on all hands, had succeeded in fortifying the yet feeble societies throughout that large Circuit, and in planting several new ones. Great numbers were awakened and converted, and between thirty and forty received into the church. Ostrander had reaped some increase on Tolland Circuit;—twenty-five had been gathered into the incipient societies, and many more awakened. Ebenezer Stevens had not labored in vain on Middletown Circuit; the Spirit of God had descended upon the people in several places, and out of a multitude awakened, thirty were added to the church. While in some places in Massachusetts a declension had occurred, in others extensive revivals had prevailed; Nantucket made its first returns of members, amounting to sixty-five; Daniel Brumley had witnessed the victories of the truth on Pittsfield Circuit; hundreds felt its power, and more than one hundred and eighty were received into the church. Chesterfield, hitherto the solitary Circuit of New Hampshire, had also enjoyed the time of refreshing under the labors of John Nichols; forty new members had been gathered, and another Circuit projected. The hardy laborers in the field of Maine, Merritt, Soule, Brodhead, Heath, Finnegan, &c., had passed through severe struggles, but with their usual success. Their leader, Joshua Taylor, had been drummed out of Castine with tin kettles, and their cause attacked with not a little pugnacity from the pulpit and the press, by their Calvinistic brethren. Some agitation was excited by a pamphlet entitled "A brief Statement and Examination of the Sentiments of the Wesleyan Methodists, by Jonathan Ward, A. M.;" in which was alleged, "1: that they hold that Christ has abolished the Moral Law; 2: deny regeneration by the special influence of the Holy Spirit; 3: make purification to be by works; 4: make religion wholly selfish; 5: deny the doctrine of eternal election; 6: deny the final perseverance of the saints; 7: hold to sinless perfection." These charges, all but the 5th and 6th, grossly false, proceeded doubtless from an honest, though uninformed mind, and were well adapted to excite the suspicion of dangerous heresy among a people who, mostly sprung from the Puritan stock of Massachusetts, had carried to this new settlement the rigid orthodoxy of their fathers. Mr. Taylor, however, taking for his motto the words of Zarobabel, "Great is the truth, and stronger than all things," published a timely reply in a pamphlet of 76 pages, which was written in a style perspicuous and lucid, in a temper bland and devout, and with a decisive logic. Mr. Ward, though manifestly foiled, returned to the attack under cover of a "Vindication" of himself; but a "Reply" from Mr. Taylor put an end to the controversy, and turned the advantage greatly to the persecuted church.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding some local drawbacks, Methodism advanced gradually in Maine. The quaint John Finnegan and Comfort C. Smith had been instrumental of an extensive reformation on Bath and Union Circuit, where more than fifty were added to the societies. The Pleasant River Circuit was abandoned, and its preacher went to a new one on Union River,* where many had been awakened and converted, and more than thirty enrolled in the new communion.

In Vermont the fields were white unto the harvest, and the reapers had thrust in the sickle and gathered a plenteous crop. The Spirit of God seemed diffused over all the Circuits ; hundreds, if not thousands were converted, and nearly *five hundred* renewed souls were incorporated into the Methodist societies The eccentric Lorenzo Dow had labored a short time with success on Essex Circuit, which extended through the southern part of the State into Canada. Seized by a sudden impression that it was his duty to cross the Atlantic and warn the Papists of Ireland, he erected a bush as a sail in a leaking canoe, and passing down the Mussisque, made his way to Montreal, whence he pursued his proposed voyage. Meanwhile the Providence of God had been preparing, in a remote village, on the deserted Circuit, a youthful evangelist who was destined to bear the standard of the truth onward over the continent, and be a burning and a shining light in the nation. Young Elijah Hedding had been converted under the labors of Joseph Mitchell, and was called out, as we have seen, by the Presiding Elder to take Dow's place. Full of the energy of youth and the unction of the Holy Spirit, he went round the Circuit like a "flame of fire ;" the power of the highest seemed to fall on the rustic assemblies, the ungodly were smitten in their consciences with terror and alarm, while the scattered disciples of the wilderness were quickened with new life and courage ; great numbers were converted unto God, and more than a hundred and sixty were added to the classes. Vergennes Circuit was travelled this year by two as indomitable men as ever fought against the powers of darkness, Joseph Mitchell and Joseph Sawyer; it was a scene of great labors and equal trials, but they bore courageously the brunt of the battle. A reformation spread over the Circuit, and about seventy were gathered into the classes. While Hedding, Mitchell and Sawyer, were thus spreading the flame of reformation west of the Green Mountains, Joseph Crawford and Elijah Chichester were extending it still more successfully east of them, on the Vershire Circuit, where the truth ran and was glorified, and more than a hundred were added to the church, besides hundreds more or less awakened, and many who were converted but entered other communions. Whitingham Circuit, which had been detached and extended from the northern part of Pittsfield Circuit at the beginning of the year, had prospered greatly under the labors of the good Peter Vannest; it made its first returns of members, amounting to nearly one hundred. A new Circuit had been projected, called Wethersfield, which extended along the western bank of the Connecticut, and comprised some eight or ten towns. It reported sixty four, as its first returns of members, at the next Conference. Only four years had passed since Nicholas Snethen travelled, the first Itinerant, on the first Circuit in Vermont; there were now nearly eleven hundred Methodists in the State. They had much more than trebled,—nearly quadrupled in two years.

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* Lee's Hist. of Meth., p. 220.

There was at the end of the present ecclesiastical year the following number of Methodists in each New England State: Connecticut, 1571; Rhode Island, 227; Massachusetts, 1577; Maine, 1197; New Hampshire, 171; Vermont, 1096; total, 5839.

These successes were but preliminary to still greater triumphs, which were approaching in the ensuing year—a period of marvellous religious interest throughout the nation; but here, at the beginning of the century, and in view of the gathering brightness, we drop the curtain over the scene for the present. We have reached the appropriate limit of our first volume — the date of a new century, of the organization of the New England Conference by its separation from that of New York,* and of the retirement of Lee, the chief hero of our narrative, from the eastern field. We have seen him, solitary and friendless, begin his mission in New England, by proclaiming "*Ye must be born again*," on the highway of Norwalk, June 17th, 1789; eleven years have passed, years of vast labors, sore trials, of poverty and perplexity, and yet of triumph. A host of noble evangelists have entered the field — Roberts, Smith, Bloodgood, Mills, Hunt, Taylor, Mudge, Pickering, Ostrander, Mitchell, McCoombs, Brodhead, Merritt, Sabin, Bostwick, Beauchamp, Coate, Soule, Kibby, Webb, and many others who were "mighty through God." They have confounded opposition, have preached the word "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," from Fairfield in Connecticut to the farthest eastern settlement of Maine, and from Provincetown in Massachusetts to St. Alban's in Vermont. They have laid securely the foundations of Methodism in all the New England States, and at the close of eleven years we behold it spread into bands, comprising nearly 50 preachers and more than 5800 members,—an average of about 120 to each preacher, — and these members and preachers distributed over 4 Districts and 31 Circuits.

Passing from the vague and scanty reminiscences of the *introduction* of Methodism into New England, we shall in our next volume enter more definitively into its history; recording not merely the formation of new Circuits and Districts, but of new Conferences — not merely annual gains of hundreds, but of thousands. Lee will pass once more, though casually, over the scene; the great agencies of Academical, Collegiate and Theological Education, of the Press and of Missions, — wide spread revivals, temporary heresies, agitations on public questions, secessions and yet continued triumphs, together with the appearance in the field of many additional and distinguished laborers — Ruter, Merwin, Sargent, Kent, Washburn, Beale, Munger, Fisk, &c. — will afford more varied aspects to the narrative and more varied lessons to its readers. Thus far we have but traced the preliminary movements of the Denomination; hereafter we shall contemplate its results — results which, in half of a century, constituted it the second religious body in numerical strength, and the first in progress within the New England States.

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* Lee's History of Methodism, Anno 1800

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